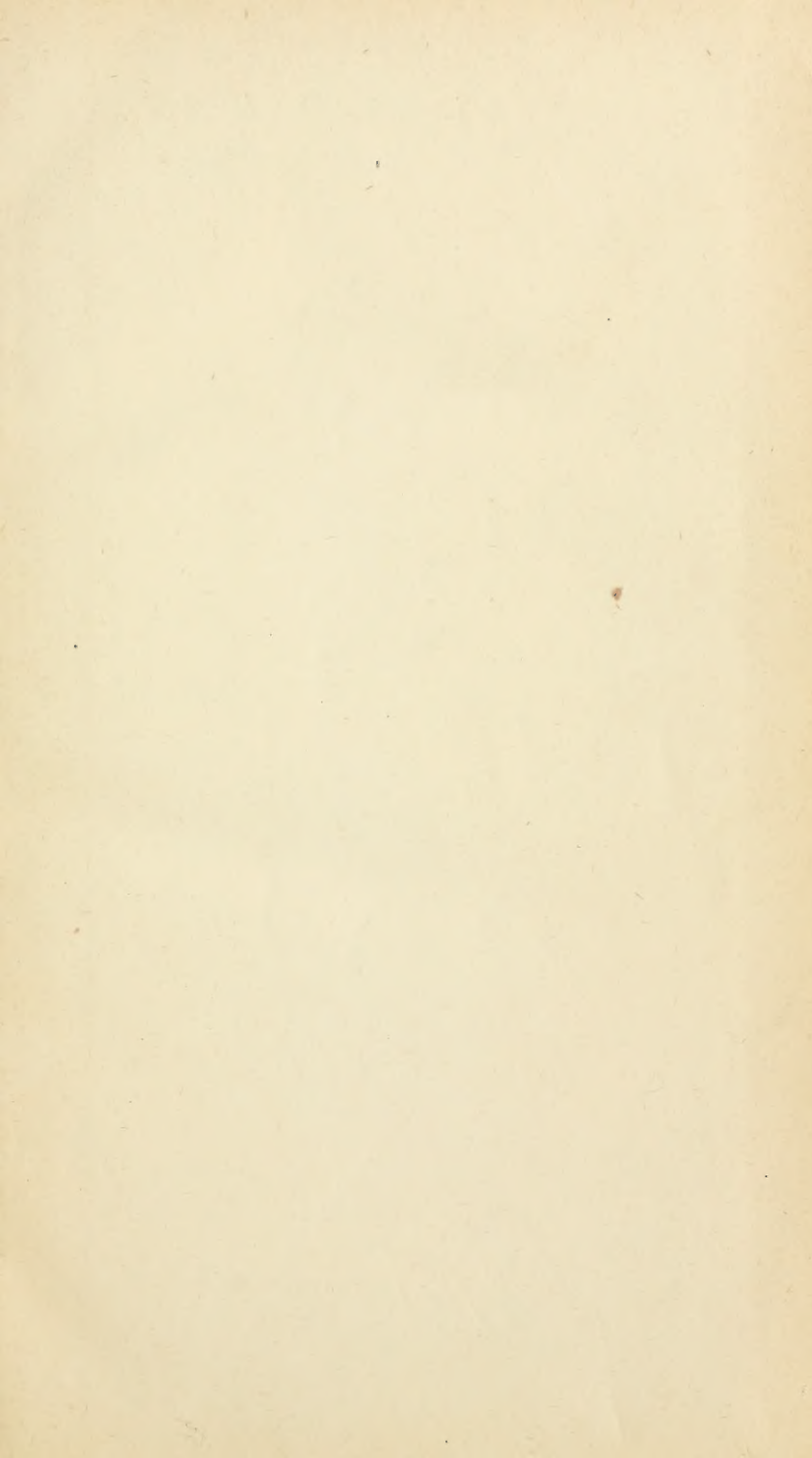


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AN
ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY,
ANCIENT AND MODERN,

FROM THE

BIRTH OF CHRIST, TO THE BEGINNING OF THE PRESENT CENTURY.

IN WHICH

The Rise, Progress, and Variations of

CHURCH POWER,

ARE CONSIDERED IN THEIR CONNEXION WITH THE STATE OF

Learning and Philosophy,

AND THE

POLITICAL HISTORY OF EUROPE, DURING THAT PERIOD.

BY THE LATE LEARNED
JOHN LAWRENCE MOSHEIM, D.D.

And Chancellor of the University of Gottingen.

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL LATIN, AND ACCOMPANIED WITH NOTES
AND CHRONOLOGICAL TABLES.

BY ARCHIBALD MACLAINE, D.D.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

TO WHICH IS ADDED, AN INDEX.

VOL. I.

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ADVERTISEMENT TO THE SECOND EDITION.

THE favourable reception which the first edition of this work met with, has encouraged the translator to employ his utmost care in rendering the second still less unworthy the acceptance of the public. He has corrected a passage erroneously translated in the second volume, at the 574th page of the quarto edition; and he has revised the whole with a degree of attention, which he hopes will secure him against the charge of any other inadvertency. He takes this opportunity of acknowledging the goodness of the learned and worthy Dr. Neve of Middleton Stoney, who favoured him with several notes, and with some hundreds of additional articles and corrections for the Index. Many of these are inserted in this edition, and an N. subjoined to each, to distinguish them from those of the translator.

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

I CANNOT persuade myself, that the complaints we hear frequently of the frivolous nature of the public taste in matters of literature, are so far to be relied on, as to make me despair of a favourable reception of the following work. A History of the Christian Church, composed with judgment, taste, and candour, drawn with uncommon discernment and industry, from the best sources, enriched with much useful learning, and several important discoveries, and connected with the history of Arts, Philosophy, and Civil Government, is an object that will very probably attract the attention of many, and must undoubtedly excite the curiosity of the judicious and the wise. A work of this nature will be considered by the *philosopher* as an important branch of the history of the human mind, and I need not mention a multitude of reasons that render it peculiarly interesting to the *Christian*. Beside, there has not hitherto appeared in English any complete history of the Church, that represents its revolutions, its divisions, and doctrines, with impartiality and truth, exposes the delusions of popish legends, breathes a spirit of moderation and freedom, and keeping perpetually in the view of the reader the true nature and design of the Christian religion, points out the deviations from its beautiful simplicity, that have been too frequent among all orders of men, and in all ages of the world.


The following work has the best claim of any I know to these characters;* and its peculiar merit is pointed out as far as modesty would permit, in the ensuing preface of its justly celebrated author. The reputation of this great man is very well known.

* Some time after I had undertaken this translation, I was honoured with a letter from the learned Bishop of Gloucester, in which he was so good as to testify his approbation of my design, and to speak of the work I here offer to the public in an English dress, in the following manner: *Mosheim's Compendium is excellent, the method admirable; in short, the only one deserving the name of an Ecclesiastical History. It deserves, and needs, frequent notes.* I hope this eminent prelate will not take amiss my placing here a testimony that was not designed to be produced in this public manner. It is, however, so adapted to give those who examine recommendations with discernment, a favourable notion of the following work, that I could not think of suppressing it. It is usual, in publishing certain ancient authors, to prefix to them the encomiums they have been honoured with by those whose authority is respected in the republic of letters. I adopt this custom so far as to mention one testimony; more would be unnecessary. The testimony of a Warburton is abundantly sufficient to answer my purpose, and will be justly looked upon as equivalent to a multitude.

His noble birth seemed to open to his ambition a fair path to civil promotion; but his zeal for the interest of religion, his insatiable thirst after knowledge, and more especially his predominant taste for sacred literature, induced him to consecrate his admirable talents to the service of the church. The German universities loaded him with literary honours. The king of Denmark invited him to settle at Copenhagen. The duke of Brunswick called him from thence to Helmstadt, where he received the marks of distinction due to his eminent abilities; filled with applause the academical chair of divinity; was honoured with the character of ecclesiastical counsellor to that respectable court; and presided over the seminaries of learning in the dutchy of Wolfenbuttle and the principality of Blackenburg. When the late king formed the design of giving an uncommon degree of lustre to the University of Gottingen, by filling it with men of the first rank in the literary world, such as a Haller, a Gesner, and a Michaelis, Dr. Mosheim was deemed worthy to appear at the head of that famous seat of learning, in the quality of chancellor; and here he died universally lamented in the year 1755, and in the sixty-first year of his age. In depth of judgment, in extent of learning, in the powers of a noble and masculine eloquence, in purity of taste, and in laborious application to all the various branches of erudition and philosophy, he had certainly very few superiors. His Latin translation of the celebrated Dr. Cudworth's *Intellectual System of the Universe*, enriched with large annotations, discovered such a profound acquaintance with ancient philosophy and erudition, as justly excited the admiration of the learned world. His ingenious illustrations of the sacred writings, his successful labours in the defence of Christianity, and the light he cast upon the history of religion and philosophy by his uninterrupted researches, appear in a multitude of volumes, which are deservedly placed among the most valuable treasures of sacred and profane literature; and the learned and judicious work, that is here presented to the public, will undoubtedly render his name illustrious in the records of religion and letters.

How far justice has been done to this excellent work, in the following translation, is a point that must be left to the decision of those who shall think proper to peruse it with attention. I can say, with the strictest truth, that I have spared no pains to render it worthy of their gracious acceptance; and this consideration gives me some claim to their candour and indulgence, for any defects they may find in it. I have endeavoured to render my translation faithful, but never proposed to render it entirely literal. The style of the original is by no means a model to imitate, in a work designed for general use. Dr. Mosheim affected brevity, and laboured to crowd many things into few words; thus his diction, though pure and correct, became sententious and harsh, without that harmony which pleases the ear, and those transitions which make a narration flow with ease. This being the case, I have sometimes taken considerable liberties with my author, and followed the *spirit*

of his narrative without adhering strictly to the *letter*. Where, indeed, the Latin phrase appeared to me elegant, expressive, and compatible with the English idiom, I have constantly followed it; in all other cases I have departed from it, and have often added a few sentences to render an observation more striking; a fact more clear, a portrait more finished. Had I been translating Cicero or Tacitus, I should not have thought such freedom pardonable. The translation of a classic author, like the copy of a capital picture, must exhibit not only the *subject*, but also the *manner* of the original; this rule, however, is not applicable to the work now under consideration.

The reader will easily distinguish the *additional* notes of the translator from the *original* ones of the author; the references to the translator's being marked with a hand, thus 

When I entered upon this undertaking, I proposed rendering the additional notes more numerous and ample, than the reader will find them. I soon perceived that the prosecution of my original plan would render this work too voluminous, and this induced me to alter my purpose. The notes I have given are not, however, inconsiderable in number; I wish I could say as much with respect to their merit and importance. I would only hope, that some of them will be looked upon as not altogether unnecessary.

Hague, Dec. 4, 1764.



AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

THE different editions of the *Elements of the Christian History* * met with such a favourable reception from the public, and the demand for them was so great, that they were, in a little time, out of print. Upon this occasion, the worthy person, at whose expense they had been presented to the public, desired earnestly to give a new edition of the same work improved and enlarged, and thus still more worthy of its gracious acceptance. The other occupations in which I was engaged, and a prudent consideration of the labour I must undergo in the correction and augmentation of a work in which I myself perceived so many imperfections, prevented my yielding, for a long time, to his earnest solicitations. The importunities of my friends at length prevailed upon me to undertake this difficult work; and I have employed assiduously my hours of leisure, during the space of two years, in bringing it to as high a degree of perfection as I am capable of giving it; so that now these *Elements of Ecclesiastical History* appear under a new form, and the changes they have undergone are certainly advantageous in every respect. I have retained still the division of the whole into certain periods; for though a continued narration would have been more agreeable to my own taste, and had also several circumstances to recommend it, yet the counsels of some learned men, who have experienced the great advantages of this division, engaged me to prefer it to every other method. And indeed, when we examine this matter with due attention, we shall find that the author, who proposes comprehending in one work all that variety of observations and facts that are necessary to an acquaintance with the state of Christianity in the different ages of the church, will find it impossible to execute this design, without adopting certain general divisions of time, and others of a more particular kind, which the variety of objects, that demand a place in his history, naturally points out.

And as this was my design in the following work, I have left its primitive form entire, and made it my principal business to cor-

* A small work published by Dr. Mosheim, many years ago, in two volumes 12mo.

rect, improve, and augment it in such a manner, as to render it more instructive and entertaining to the reader.

My principal care has been employed in establishing upon the most solid foundations, and confirming by the most respectable authority, the credit of the facts related in this history. For this purpose, I have drawn from the fountain head, and have gone to those genuine sources from whence the pure and uncorrupted streams of evidence flow. I have consulted the best authors of every age, and chiefly those who were contemporary with the events they relate, or lived near the periods in which they happened; and I have endeavoured to report their contents with brevity, perspicuity, and precision. Abbreviators, generally speaking, do little more than reduce to a short and narrow compass, those large bodies of history, that have been compiled from original authors: this method may be, in some measure, justified by several reasons, and therefore is not to be entirely disapproved. From hence nevertheless it happens, that the errors, which almost always abound in large and voluminous productions, are propagated with facility, and passing from one book into many, are unhappily handed down from age to age. This I had formerly observed in several abridgments: and I had lately the mortification to find some instances of this in my own work, when I examined it by the pure lamp of antiquity, and compared it with those original records that are considered as the genuine sources of sacred history. It was then, that I perceived the danger of confiding implicitly even in those who are the most generally esteemed on account of their fidelity, penetration, and diligence: and it was then also, that I became sensible of the necessity of adding, suppressing, changing, and correcting several things in the small work which I formerly published, and which has been already mentioned. In the execution of this necessary task, I can affirm with truth, that I have not been wanting in perseverance, industry, or attention: and yet, with all these, it is extremely difficult to avoid mistakes of every kind, as those who are acquainted with the nature of historical researches abundantly know. How far I have approached to that inaccessible degree of exactness, which is chargeable with no error, must be left to the decision of those, whose extensive knowledge of the Christian history entitles them to pronounce judgment in this matter. That such may judge with the more facility, I have mentioned the authors who have been my guides: and, if I have in any respect misrepresented their accounts or their sentiments, I must confess, that I am much more inexcusable than some other historians, who have met with and deserved the same reproach, since I have perused with attention and compared with each other the various authors to whose testimony I appeal, having formed a resolution of trusting to no authority inferior to that of the original sources of historical truth.

In order to execute, with some degree of success, the design I formed of rendering my abridgment more perfect, and of giving the history of the church as it stands in the most authentic records.

and in the writings of those whose authority is most respectable, I found myself obliged to make many changes and additions. These will be visible through the whole of the following work, but more especially in the Third Book, which comprehends the history of the Christian, and particularly of the Latin or western church, from Charlemagne to the rise of Luther and the commencement of the Reformation. This period of Ecclesiastical History, though it abound with shining examples : though it be unspeakably useful as a key to the knowledge of the political, as well as religious state of Europe : though it be singularly adapted to unfold the origin and explain the reasons of many modern transactions, has nevertheless been hitherto treated with less perspicuity, solidity, and elegance, than any other branch of the history of the church. The number of writers that have attempted to throw light upon this interesting period is considerable, but few of them are in the hands of the public. The barbarous style of one part of them, the profound ignorance of another, and the partial and factious spirit of a third, are such as render them by no means inviting ; and the enormous bulk and excessive price of the productions of some of the best of these writers must necessarily render them scarce. It is further to be observed, that some of the most valuable records that belong to the period of Ecclesiastical History now under consideration, lie yet in manuscript in the collections of the curious, or the opulent, who are willing to pass for such, and are thus concealed from public view. Those who consider these circumstances will no longer be surprised, that in this part of Ecclesiastical History, the most learned and laborious writers have omitted many things of consequence, and treated others without success. Among these, the annalists and other historians so highly celebrated by the church of Rome, such as Baronius, Raynaldus, Bzovius, Manriques, and Wadding, though they were amply furnished with ancient manuscripts and records, have nevertheless committed more faults, and fallen into errors of greater consequence, than other writers, who were by far their inferiors in learning and credit, and had much less access to original records than they were favoured with.

These considerations induce me to hope, that the work I here present to the public will neither appear superfluous nor useless. For as I have employed many years in the most laborious researches, in order to acquire a thorough acquaintance with the history of Christianity, from the eighth century downward, and as I flatter myself, that by the assistance of books and manuscripts too little consulted, I have arrived at a more certain and satisfactory knowledge of that period than is to be found in the generality of writers, I cannot but think, that it will be doing real service to Ecclesiastical History to produce some of these discoveries, as this may encourage the learned and industrious to pursue the plan that I have thus begun, and to complete the history of the Latin church, by dispelling the darkness of what is called the *middle age*. And indeed I may venture to affirm, that I have brought to light seve-

ral things hitherto generally unknown, corrected from records of undoubted authority accounts of other things known but imperfectly, and expressed with much perplexity and confusion, and exposed the fabulous nature of many events that deform the annals of sacred history. I here perhaps carry too far that self praise, which the candour and indulgence of the public are disposed either to overlook as the infirmity, or to regard as the privilege of old age. Those, however, who are curious to know how far this self applause is just and well grounded, have only to cast an eye on the illustrations I have given on the subject of Constantine's *Donation*, as also with respect to the *Cathari* and *Albigenses*, the *Beghards* and *Beguines*, the *Brethren* and *Sisters of the free Spirit*, whose pestilential fanaticism was a public nuisance to many countries in Europe during the space of four hundred years, the *Fratricelli*, or *Little Brethren*, the controversies between the *Franciscans* and the *Roman Pontiffs*, the history of Berenger and the *Lollards*, and other matters. When my illustrations on these subjects and points of history are compared with what we find concerning them in other writers, it will perhaps appear, that my pretensions to the merit of some interesting discoveries are not entirely without foundation.

These accessions to Ecclesiastical History could not be exhibited with the same brevity which I have observed in treating other subjects, that have already been amply enlarged upon by others; for this would have been incompatible with the information of the curious, who would have received but imperfect and confused notions of these subjects, and would have made me, perhaps, pass for a fabulous writer, who advanced novelties, without mentioning either my guides or my authorities. I have, therefore, not only explained all those points of history which carry with them an appearance of novelty, or recede considerably from the notions commonly received, but have also confirmed them by a sufficient number of observations and testimonies to establish their credibility on a solid foundation. The illustrations and enlargements, which, generally speaking, carry an air of disproportion and superfluity in an historical abridgment, were absolutely necessary in the present case.

These reasons engaged me to change the plan laid down in my former work, and one peculiar consideration induced me to render the present history more ample and voluminous. The *Elements*, so often mentioned, were designed principally for the use of those who are appointed to instruct the studious youth in the history and vicissitudes of the Christian church, and who stand in need of a compendious text to give a certain order and method to their prelections. In this view I treated each subject with the utmost brevity, and left, as was natural and fitting, much to the learning and abilities of those who should think proper to make use of these *Elements* in their course of instruction. But in reviewing this compendious work with a design to offer it anew to the public, I imagined it might be rendered more acceptable to many, by such im-

provements and additions as might adapt it, not only to the use of those who teach others, but also of those who are desirous of acquiring, by their own application, a general knowledge of Ecclesiastical History. It was with this view that I made considerable additions to my former work, illustrated many things that had been there obscurely expressed for the sake of brevity, and reduced to a regular and perspicuous order a variety of facts, the recital of which had been more or less attended with perplexity and confusion. Hence it is, that in the following work, the history of the calamities in which the Christians of the first ages were involved, and the origin and progress of the sects and heresies which troubled the church, are exhibited with an uncommon degree of accuracy and precision. Hence the various forms of religion, which have sprung from the excessive love of novelty are represented without prejudice or partiality, and with all possible perspicuity and truth. It is also in consequence of this change of my original design, that I have taken the utmost pains to state more clearly religious controversies, to estimate their respective moment and importance, and to exhibit the arguments alleged on both sides; nor must I omit mentioning the care and labour I have employed in giving an exact narration of the transactions, wars, and enterprising measures of the Roman Pontiffs, from the reign of Charlemagne down to the present times.

Those, therefore, who are prevented from applying themselves to a regular study of Ecclesiastical History through want of leisure, or by not having at hand the sources of instruction, and are nevertheless desirous of acquiring a distinct knowledge of certain events, doctrines, or religious rites, may consult the following work, in which they will find the information they want; and those who are inclined to push their inquiries still further, will see the course they must pursue, and the authors mentioned whom it will be proper for them to peruse.

It would betray an unpardonable presumption in me to imagine, that in a work, whose plan is so extensive, and whose contents are so various, I have never fallen into any mistakes, or let any thing drop from my pen which stands in need of correction. But as I am conscious to myself of having conducted this undertaking with the most upright intentions, and of having employed all those means that are generally looked upon as the best preservatives against the seduction of error, I would hope that the mistakes I may have committed, are neither so frequent, nor so momentous as to be productive of any pernicious effects.

I might add more; but nothing more is necessary to enable those to judge of this work, who judge with knowledge, impartiality, and candour. I therefore conclude, by offering the just tribute of my gratitude to Almighty God, who amidst the infirmities of my advanced years, and other pressures under which I have laboured, has supplied me with strength to bring this difficult work to a conclusion.

GOTTINGEN, March 23, 1755.

INTRODUCTION.

I. ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY is a clear and faithful narration of the transactions, revolutions, and events that relate to that large community which bears the name of Jesus Christ, and is vulgarly known under the denomination of the Church. It comprehends both the *external* and *internal* condition of this community, and so connects each event with the causes from which it proceeds, and the instruments which have been concerned in its production, that the attentive reader may be led to observe the displays of providential wisdom and goodness in the preservation of the church, and thus find his piety improved, as well as his knowledge.

Definition of
Ecclesiastical
History.

II. The church, founded by the ministry and death of Christ, cannot be represented with more perspicuity and propriety than under the notion of a society subjected to a lawful dominion, and governed by certain laws and institutions, mostly of a moral and spiritual tendency. To such a society many external events must happen, which will advance or oppose its interests, and accelerate or retard its progress towards perfection, in consequence of its unavoidable connexion with the course and revolutions of human affairs. Moreover, as nothing is stable and uniform where the imperfections of humanity take place, this religious society, beside the vicissitudes to which it must be exposed from the influence of external events, must be liable to various changes in its internal constitution. In this view of things then it appears, that the history of the church, like that of the state, may be divided, with propriety into two general branches, which we may call its *external* and *internal* history.

Division of
Ecclesiastical
History into
external and
internal.

iii. The *external history* of the church comprehends all the changes, vicissitudes, and events, that have diversified the external state and condition of this sacred community. And as all public societies have their periods of lustre and decay, and are exposed to revolutions both of a happy and calamitous nature, so this first branch of Ecclesiastical History may be subdivided into two, comprehending respectively, the *prosperous* and *calamitous* events that have happened to the church.

iv. The *prosperous* events that have contributed to extend the limits, or to augment the influence, of the Christian church, have proceeded either from its rulers and leaders, or from the subordinate members of this great community. Under the former class, we rank its *public* rulers, such as princes, magistrates, and pontiffs, who, by their authority and laws, their liberality, and even their arms, have maintained its cause and extended its borders; as also its more *private* leaders, its learned and pious doctors, whose wise counsels, pious exploits, eminent examples, and distinguished abilities have contributed most to promote its *true* prosperity and lustre. Under the latter class, we may comprehend the advantages which the cause of Christianity has derived from the active faith, the invincible constancy, the fervent piety, and extensive charity of its genuine professors, who, by the attractive lustre of these amiable virtues, have led many into the way of truth, and engaged them to submit themselves to the empire of the Messiah.

v. Under the *calamitous* events that have happened to the church, may be comprehended the injuries it has received from the vices and passions of its friends, and the bitter opposition and insidious stratagems of its enemies. The professors of Christianity, and more especially the doctors and rulers of the church, have done unspeakable detriment to the cause of religion, by their ignorance and sloth, their luxury and ambition, their uncharitable zeal, animosities and contentions, of which many shocking examples will be exhibited in the course of this history. Christianity had *public* enemies to encounter, even princes and magistrates, who opposed its progress by penal laws, and blood-thirsty persecution: it had also private and inveterate adversaries in a certain set of philoso-

phers, or rather sophists, who, enslaved to superstition, or abandoned to atheism, endeavoured to blast the rising church by their perfidious accusations and their virulent writings.

VI. Such then are the events that are exhibited to our view in the external history of the church. Its *internal history* comprehends the changes and vicissitudes that have happened in its inward constitution, in that system of discipline and doctrine by which it stands distinguished from all other religious societies. This branch may be properly termed the *History of the Christian Religion*. The causes of these internal changes are to be sought for principally in the conduct and measures of those who have presided and borne rule in the church. It has been too frequently their practice to interpret the truths and precepts of religion in a manner accommodated to their particular systems, nay, to their private interest; and, while they have found in some implicit obedience, they have met with warm opposition from others. Hence have proceeded theological broils and civil commotions, in which the cause of religion has often been defended at the expense both of justice and humanity. All these things must be observed with the strictest attention by an ecclesiastical historian.

VII. The first thing, therefore, that should be naturally treated in the *internal history* of the church, is the history of its ministers, rulers, and form of government. When we look back to the commencement of the Christian church, we find its government administered jointly by the pastors and the people. But, in process of time, the scene changes, and we see these pastors affecting an air of pre-eminence and superiority, trampling upon the rights and privileges of the community, and assuming to themselves a supreme authority both in civil and religious matters. This invasion of the rights of the people was at length carried to such a height, that a single man administered, or at least pretended a right to administer, the affairs of the whole church with an unlimited sway. Among the doctors of these early times, there were some who acquired, by their learned labours, a shining reputation, and an universal influence; they were regarded as oracles; their decisions were handed down to posterity as sacred rules of faith and practice; and they

Internal history, which comprehends,

First, the history of the Christian doctors.

thus deserve to be mentioned, with particular distinction, among the governors of the church, though no part of its public administration was actually in their hands.^a

VIII. After giving an account of the rulers and doctors of the church, the ecclesiastical historian proceeds to exhibit a view of the *laws* that are peculiar to this sacred community, that form, as it were, its centre of union, and distinguish it from all other religious societies. These *laws* are of two kinds. The first are properly called *divine*, because they are immediately enacted by God himself, and are contained in those sacred books, which carry the most striking marks of a divine origin. They consist of those *doctrines* that are the objects of faith and reason, and those *precepts* that are addressed to the heart and the affections. To the second kind belong those *laws* that are merely of human institution, and derive their authority only from the injunctions of the rulers of the church.

IX. In that part of the sacred history which relates to the doctrines of Christianity, it is necessary, above all things, to inquire particularly into the degree of authority that has been attributed to the sacred writings in all the different periods of the church, and also into the manner in which the divine doctrines they contain, have been explained and illustrated. For the true state of religion in every age can only be learned from the point of view in which these celestial oracles were considered, and from the manner in which they were expounded to the people. As long as they were the only rule of faith, religion preserved its native purity; and in proportion as their decisions were either neglected or postponed to the inventions of men, it degenerated from its primitive and divine simplicity. It is further necessary to show under this head, what was the fate of the pure laws and doctrines of Christianity; how they were interpreted and explained; how they were defended against the enemies of the gospel; how they were corrupted and adulterated by the ignorance and licentiousness of men. And, finally, it will be proper to inquire here, how far the lives and manners of Christians have been conform-

^a By these our author means the *fathers*, whose writings form still a rule of faith in the Romish church, while in the Protestant churches their authority diminishes from day to day.

able to the dictates of these sacred laws, and the influence that these sublime doctrines ought to have upon the hearts of men ; as also to examine the rules of discipline prescribed by the spiritual governors of the church, in order to correct and restrain the vices and irregularities of its members.

x. The *human laws*, that constitute a part of ecclesiastical government, consist in precepts concerning the external worship of the Deity, and in certain rites, either confirmed by custom, or introduced by positive and express authority. *Rites and ceremonies* regard religion either *directly* or *indirectly* ; by the former, we understand those that are used in the immediate worship of the Supreme Being, whether in public or in private ; by the latter, such pious and decent institutions as, beside direct acts of worship have obtained in the church. This part of sacred history is of a vast extent, both on account of the great diversity of these ceremonies, and the frequent changes and modifications through which they have passed. This consideration will justify our treating them with brevity, in a work which is only designed as a compendious view of Ecclesiastical History.

Thirdly, the history of its ceremonies and worship.

xi. As bodies politic are sometimes distracted with wars and seditions, so has the Christian church, though designed to be the mansion of charity and concord, been unhappily perplexed by intestine divisions, occasioned sometimes by points of doctrine, at others by a variety of sentiments about certain rites and ceremonies. The principal authors of these divisions have been stigmatized with the title of *heretics*, and their peculiar opinions of consequence distinguished by the appellation of *heresies*.^b The nature therefore and progress of these intestine divisions or *heresies* are to be carefully unfolded ; and if this be done with judgment and impartiality, it must prove useful and interesting in the highest degree, though at the same time it must be observed, that no branch of Ecclesiastical History is so painful and difficult, on account of the sagacity, candour, and application that it requires, in order to its being treated in a satisfactory manner. The difficulty of arriving at the truth, in researches of this na-

Fourthly, the history of the heresies that have divided it.

^b A term innocent in its primitive signification, though become odious by the enormity of some errors, to which it has been applied, and also by the use that has been made of it, to vent the malignity of enthusiasts and bigots.

ture, is extreme, on account of the injurious treatment that has been shown to the heads of religious sects, and the unfair representations that have been made of their tenets and opinions; and this difficulty has been considerably augmented by this particular circumstance, that the greatest part of the writings of those who were branded with the name of heretics have not reached our times. It is therefore the duty of a candid historian to avoid attaching to this term the invidious sense in which it is too often used, since it is the invective of all contending parties, and is employed against truth as frequently as against error. The wisest method here is to take the word *heretic* in its general signification, as denoting a person, who, either directly or indirectly, has been the occasion of exciting divisions and dissensions among Christians.

XII. After thus considering what constitutes the *matter* of Ecclesiastical History, it will be proper to bestow a few thoughts on the *manner* of treating it, as this is a point of too much importance not to deserve a moment's attention. And here we may observe, that in order to render both the external and internal history of the church truly interesting and useful, it is absolutely necessary to trace effects to their causes, and to connect events with the circumstances, views, principles, and instruments that have contributed to their existence. A bare recital of facts can at best but enrich the *memory*, and furnish a certain degree of amusement; but the historian, who enters into the secret springs that direct the course of outward events, and views things in their various relations, connexions, and tendencies, gives thus a proper exercise to the *judgment* of the reader, and administers on many occasions, the most useful lessons of wisdom and prudence. It is true, a high degree of caution is to be observed here, lest, in disclosing the secret springs of public events, we substitute imaginary causes in the place of real, and attribute the actions of men to principles they never professed.

XIII. In order to discover the secret causes of public events, some general succours are to be derived from the *history of the times* in which they happened, and the *testimonies of the authors* by whom they are recorded. But beside these, a considerable acquaintance with human nature, founded on long ob-

In treating Ecclesiastical History, events are to be considered in connexion with their causes.

General method of investigating the secret causes of things.

servation and experience, is singularly useful in researches of this kind. The historian, who has acquired a competent knowledge of the views that occupy the generality of men, who has studied a great variety of characters, and attentively observed the force and violence of human passions, together with the infirmities and contradictions they produce in the conduct of life, will find, in this knowledge, a key to the secret reasons and motives which gave rise to many of the most important events of ancient times. A knowledge also of the *manners* and *opinions* of the persons concerned in the events that are related, will contribute much to lead us to the true origin of things.

xiv. There are, however, beside these general views, particular considerations, which will assist us still further in tracing up to their true causes the various events of sacred history. We must, for example, in the external history of the church, attend carefully to two things ; *first*, to the political state of those kingdoms and nations in which the Christian religion has been embraced or rejected ; and *secondly*, to their religious state, i. e. the opinions they have entertained concerning the divine nature, and the worship that is to be addressed to him. For we shall then perceive, with more certainty and less difficulty, the reasons of the different reception Christianity has met with in different nations when we are acquainted with the respective forms of civil government, the political maxims, and the public forms of religion that prevailed in those countries and in those periods of time in which the gospel received encouragement, or met with opposition.

More particular rules for coming to this knowledge in the external history of the church;

xv. With respect to the *internal history of the church*, nothing is more adapted to lay open to view the hidden springs of its various changes, than an acquaintance with the *history of learning and philosophy* in the times of old. For it is certain, that human learning and philosophy have, in all times, pretended to modify the doctrines of Christianity ; and that these pretensions have extended further than belongs to the province of philosophy on the one hand, or is consistent with the purity and simplicity of the gospel on the other. It may also be observed, that a knowledge of the forms of civil government, and of the superstitious rites and institutions of ancient times, is not only useful, as we remarked above, to

and in its internal history.

illustrate several things in the *external* history of the church, but also to render a satisfactory account of its *internal* variations, both in point of doctrine and worship. For the genius of human laws and the maxims of civil rulers have undoubtedly had a great influence in forming the constitution of the church; and even its spiritual leaders have, in too many instances, from an ill-judged prudence, modelled its discipline and worship after the ancient superstitions.

XVI. We cannot be at any loss to know the sources from whence this important knowledge is to be derived.

The sources from whence Ecclesiastical History must be derived.

The best writers of every age, who make mention of ecclesiastical affairs, and particularly those who were contemporary with the events they relate, are to be carefully consulted; since it is from credible testimonies and respectable authorities that history derives a solid and permanent foundation. Our esteem for those writers who may be considered as the sources of historical knowledge, ought not however to lead us to treat with neglect the historians and annalists, who have already made use of those original records; since it betrays a foolish sort of vanity to reject the advantages that may be derived from the succours and labours of those who have preceded us in their endeavours to cast light upon matters that have been for many ages covered with obscurity.^c

XVII. From all this we shall easily discern the qualifications that are essential to a good writer of Ecclesiastical History. His knowledge of human affairs must be considerable, and his learning extensive.

The essential qualities of an Ecclesiastical History.

He must be endowed with a spirit of observation and sagacity; a habit of reasoning with evidence and facility; a faithful memory; and a judgment matured by experience, and strengthened by exercise. Such are the intellectual endowments that are required in the character of a good historian; and the moral qualities that are necessary to complete it, are, a persevering and inflexible attachment to truth and virtue, a freedom from the servitude of prejudice and passion, and a laborious and patient turn of mind.

^c The various writers of Ecclesiastical History are enumerated by Sever. Walt Sluterus, in his *Propylæum Historiæ Christianæ*, published at Lunenburg in 4to. in the year 1696; and by Casp. Sagittarius, in his *Introductio ad Historiam Ecclesiasticam, singulasque ejus partes*.

XVIII. Those who undertake to write the history of the Christian church are exposed to receive a bias from three different sources, from *times*, *persons*, and *opinions*. The *times*, in which we live, have often so great an influence on our manner of judging, as to make us consider the events which happen in our days, as a rule by which we are to estimate the probability or evidence of those that are recorded in the history of past ages. The *persons*, on whose testimonies we think we have reason to depend, acquire an imperceptible authority over our sentiments, that too frequently seduces us to adopt their errors, especially if these persons have been distinguished by eminent degrees of sanctity and virtue. And an attachment to favourite *opinions* leads authors sometimes to pervert, or at least to modify, facts in favour of those who have embraced these opinions, or to the disadvantage of such as have opposed them. These kinds of seduction are so much the more dangerous, as those whom they deceive are in innumerable cases, insensible of their delusion, and of the false representations of things to which it leads them. It is not necessary to observe the solemn obligations that bind a historian to guard against these three sources of error with the most delicate circumspection, and the most scrupulous attention.

A historian must be free from a servile attachment to times, men, and opinions.

XIX. It is well known nevertheless how far ecclesiastical historians, in all ages, have departed from these rules, and from others of equal evidence and importance. For not to mention those who lay claim to a high rank among the writers of history in consequence of a happy memory, loaded with an ample heap of materials, nor those whose pens are rather guided by sordid views of interest than by a generous love of truth, it is but too evident, how few in number the unprejudiced and impartial historians are, whom neither the influence of the sect to which they belong, nor the venerable and imposing names of antiquity, nor the spirit of the times and the torrent of prevailing *opinion*, can turn aside from the obstinate pursuit of truth *alone*. In the present age, more especially, the spirit of the times and the influence of predominant opinions, have gained with many an incredible ascendant. Hence we find frequently in the writings even of learned men such wretched arguments as

The defects that are visible in the writers of church history.

these ; “ Such an opinion is true ; therefore it must of necessity have been adopted by the primitive Christians. Christ has commanded us to live in such a manner ; therefore it is undoubtedly certain, that the Christians of ancient times lived so. A certain custom does not take place now ; therefore it did not prevail in former times.”

xx. If those who apply themselves to the composition of Ecclesiastical History be careful to avoid the sources of error mentioned above, their labours will be eminently useful to mankind, and more especially to those who are called to the important office of instructing others in the sacred truths and duties of Christianity. The history of the church presents to our view a variety of objects that are every way adapted to confirm our faith. When we contemplate here the discouraging obstacles, the united efforts of kingdoms and empires, and the dreadful calamities which Christianity, in its very infancy, was obliged to encounter, and over which it gained an immortal victory, this will be sufficient to fortify its true and zealous professors against all the threats, cavils, and stratagems of profane and impious men. The great and shining examples also, which, display their lustre, more or less, in every period of the Christian history, must have an admirable tendency to inflame our piety, and to excite, even in the coldest and most insensible hearts, the love of God and virtue. Those amazing revolutions and events that distinguished every age of the church, and often seemed to arise from small beginnings, and causes of little consequence, proclaim, with a solemn and respectable voice, the empire of Providence, and also the inconstancy and vanity of human things. And, among the many advantages that arise from the study of Ecclesiastical History, it is none of the least, that we shall see therein the origin and occasions of those ridiculous rites, absurd opinions, foolish superstitions, and pernicious errors, with which Christianity is yet disfigured in too many parts of the world. This knowledge will naturally lead us to a view of the truth in its beautiful simplicity, will engage us to love it, and render us zealous in its defence ; not to mention the pleasure and satisfaction that we must feel in researches and discoveries of such an interesting kind.

The advantages that result from the study of Ecclesiastical History. General,

XXI. They, more especially, who are appointed to instruct the youth in the public universities, as also such as are set apart for the service of the church, ^{and particular.} will derive from this study the most useful lessons of wisdom and prudence, to direct them in the discharge of their respective offices. On the one hand, the inconsiderate zeal and temerity of others, and the peniculous consequences with which they have been attended, will teach circumspection; and in the mistakes into which even men of eminent merit and abilities have fallen, they will often see the things they are obliged to avoid, and the sacrifices it will be prudent to make, in order to maintain peace and concord in the church; on the other, illustrious examples and salutary measures will hold forth to them a rule of conduct, a lamp to show them the paths they must pursue. It may be farther observed, that, if we except the arms which scripture and reason furnish against superstition and error, there is nothing that will enable us to combat them with more efficacy than the view of their deplorable effects, as they are represented to us in the history of the church. It would be endless to enumerate all the advantages that result from the study of Ecclesiastical History; experience alone can display these in all their extent; nor shall we mention the benefits that may be derived from it by those who have turned their views to other sciences than that of theology, and its more peculiar utility to such as are engaged in the study of the civil law. All this would lead us too far from our present design.

XXII. As the history of the church is *external* or *internal*, so the manner of treating it must be suited to that division. As to the first, when the narration is long, and the thread of the history runs through a great number of ages, it is proper to divide it into certain periods, which will give the reader time to breathe, assist memory, and also introduce a certain method and order into the work. In the following history the usual division into centuries is adopted preferably to all others, because most generally liked; though it be attended with difficulties and inconveniences.

The method of treating Ecclesiastical History in its external and internal branches.

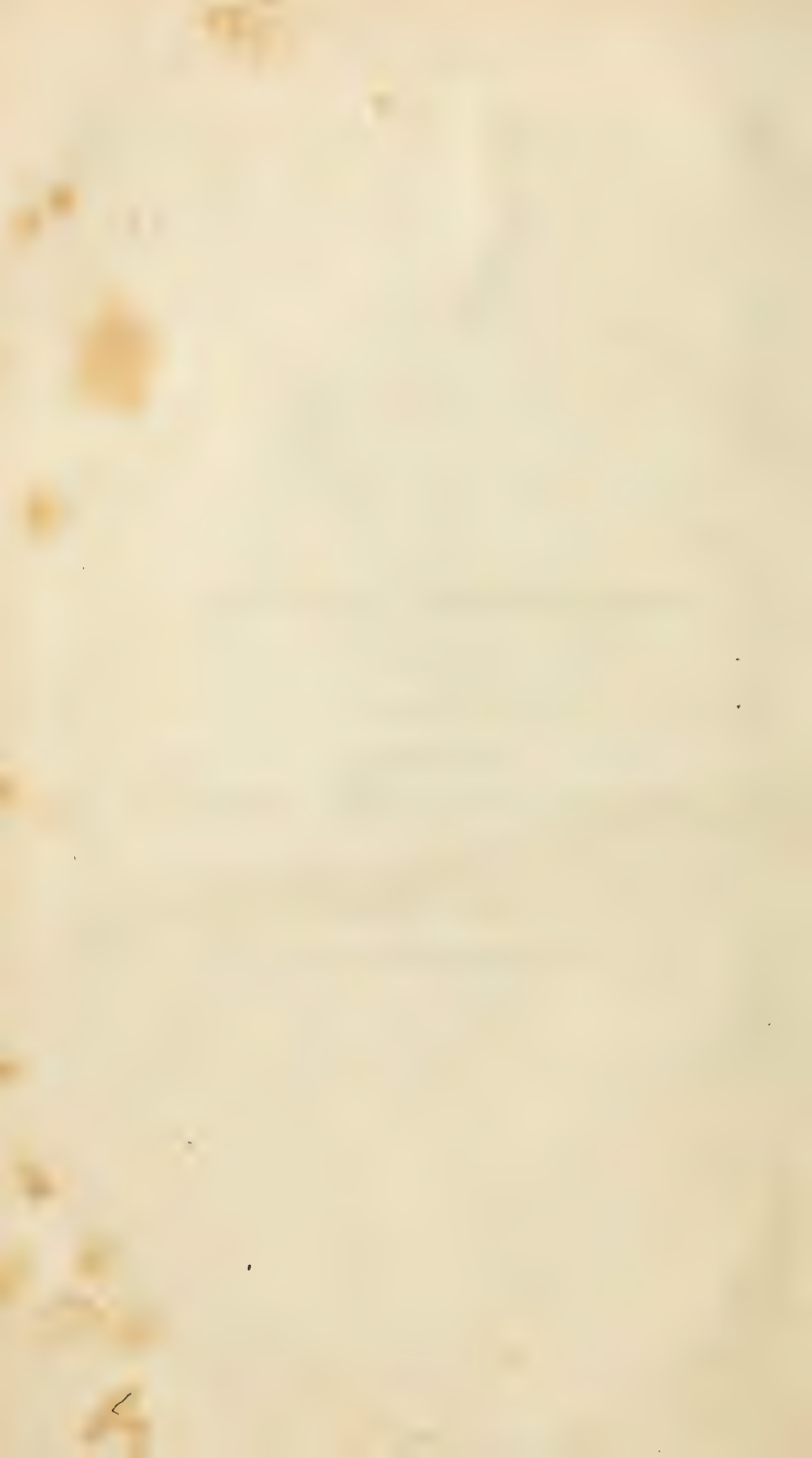
XXIII. A considerable part of these inconveniences will be however removed, if, beside this smaller division into centuries, we adopt a larger one, and divide the space of time that elapsed between the birth of Christ and our days

into certain grand periods, that are distinguished by signal revolutions or remarkable events. It is on this account that we have judged it expedient to comprehend the following history in Four books, that will take in four remarkable periods ; the First will be employed in exhibiting the state and vicissitudes of the Christian church, from its commencement to the time of Constantine the Great. The Second will comprehend the period that extends from the reign of Constantine to that of Charlemagne, which produced such a remarkable change in the face of Europe. The Third will contain the History of the Church, from the time of Charlemagne to the memorable period when Luther arose in Germany to oppose the tyranny of Rome, and to deliver divine truth from the darkness that covered it. And the Fourth will carry down the same history, from the rise of Luther to the present times.

xxiv. We have seen above, that the sphere of Ecclesiastical History is extensive, that it comprehends a great variety of objects, and embraces political as well as religious matters, so far as the former are related to the latter, either as causes or effects. But however great the diversity of these objects may be, they are closely connected ; and it is the particular business of an ecclesiastical historian to observe a method that will show this connexion in the most conspicuous point of view, and form into one regular *whole* a variety of parts that seem heterogeneous and discordant. Different writers have followed here different methods, according to the diversity of their views and their peculiar manner of thinking. The order I have observed will be seen above in that part of this *introduction*, which treats of the subject matter of Ecclesiastical History ; the mention of it is therefore omitted here, to avoid unnecessary repetitions.

AN
ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY.

BOOK THE FIRST
CONTAINING
THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH,
FROM THE
BIRTH OF CHRIST,
TO CONSTANTINE THE GREAT.



AN

ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY.

BOOK I.

CONTAINING THE HISTORY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH FROM ITS FIRST RISE TO
THE TIME OF CONSTANTINE THE GREAT.

PART I.

COMPREHENDING THE EXTERNAL HISTORY OF THE CHURCH.

CHAPTER I.

CONCERNING THE CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS STATE OF THE WORLD AT
THE BIRTH OF CHRIST.

I. A GREAT part of the world was become subject to the Roman empire, when Jesus Christ made his appearance upon earth. The remoter nations which had submitted to the yoke of this mighty empire, were ruled, either by Roman governors invested with temporary commissions, or by their own princes and laws, in subordination to the republic, whose sovereignty was to be acknowledged, and from which the conquered kings that were continued in their dominions, derived their borrowed majesty. At the same time the Roman people and their venerable senate, though they had not lost all shadow of liberty, were yet in reality, reduced to a state of servile submission to Augustus Cæsar, who by artifice, perfidy, and bloodshed, had proceeded to an enormous degree of power, and united in his own person the pompous titles of emperor, sovereign, pontiff, censor, tribune of the people, proconsul; in a word, all the great offices of the state.^a

The state of
the Roman
empire.

^a See for this purpose the learned work of Augustin Campianus, entitled, *De officio et potestate Magistratum Romanorum et jurisdictione*, lib. i. cap. i. p. 3, 4, &c. Geneva. 1725, in 4to.

II. The Roman government, considered both with respect to its form, and its laws, was certainly mild and equitable.^b But the injustice and avarice of the pretors and proconsuls, and the ambitious lust of conquest and dominion, which was the predominant passion of the Roman people, together with the rapacious proceedings of the publicans, by whom the taxes of the empire were levied, were the occasions of perpetual tumults and unsupportable grievances. And among the many evils that arose from thence we justly reckon the formidable armies, that were necessary to support these extortions in the provinces, and the civil wars which frequently broke out between the oppressed nations and their haughty conquerors.

The inconveniences which proceeded from the corrupt administration of its magistrates.

III. It must, at the same time, be acknowledged, that this supreme dominion of one people, or rather of one man, over so many kingdoms, was attended with many considerable advantages to mankind in general, and to the propagation and advancement of Christianity in particular. For, by the means of this almost universal empire, many nations, different in their language and in their manners, were united more intimately together in social intercourse. Hence a passage was opened in the remotest countries, by the communications which the Romans formed between the conquered provinces.^c Hence also the nations, whose manners were savage and barbarous, were civilized by the laws and commerce of the Romans. And by this, in short, the benign influence of letters and philosophy was spread abroad in countries which had lain before under the darkest ignorance. All this contributed, no doubt, in a singular manner, to facilitate the progress of the gospel, and to crown the labours of its first ministers and heralds with success.^d

The advantages which arose from its extent.

IV. The Roman empire, at the birth of Christ, was less agitated by wars and tumults, than it had been for many years before. For, though I cannot assent to the opinion of those who, following the

The Roman empire enjoys peace.

^b See Moyle's *Essay on the Constitution of the Roman Government*, in the posthumous works of that author, vol. i. p. 1—48, as also Scip. Masfaii *Verona illustrata*, lib. ii. p. 65.

^c See, for a further illustration of this matter, *Histoire des grands chemins de l'Empire Romain*, par Nicol. Bergier, printed in the year 1728. See also the very learned Everard Otto, *De tutela viarum publicarum*, part ii. p. 314.

^d Origen, among others, makes particular mention of this, in the second book of his answer to Celsus, p. 79, of the Cambridge edition.

account of Orosius, maintain that the temple of Janus was then shut, and that wars and discords absolutely ceased throughout the world ;^e yet it is certain, that the period, in which our Saviour descended upon earth, may be justly styled the *pacific age*, if we compare it with the preceding times. And indeed, the tranquillity, that then reigned, was necessary to enable the ministers of Christ to execute, with success, their sublime commission to the human race.

v. The want of ancient records renders it impossible to say any thing satisfactory or certain concerning the state of those nations, who did not receive the Roman yoke ; nor indeed is their history essential to our present purpose. It is sufficient to observe, with respect to them, that those who inhabited the eastern regions were strangers to the sweets of liberty, and groaned under the burden of an oppressive yoke. This, their softness and effeminacy, both in point of manners and bodily constitution, contributed to make them support with an unmanly patience ; and even the religion they professed rivetted their chains. On the contrary, the northern nations enjoyed ; in their frozen dwellings, the blessings of sacred freedom, which their government, their religion, a robust and vigorous frame of body and spirit, derived from the inclemency and severity of their climate, all united to preserve and maintain.^f

The state of
the other na-
tions.

vi. All these nations lived in the practice of the most abominable superstitions. For though the notion of one Supreme Being was not entirely effaced in the human mind, but showed itself frequently, even through the darkness of the grossest idolatry ; yet all nations, except that of the Jews, acknowledged a number of governing powers, whom they called gods, and one or more of which they supposed to preside over each particular province or people. They worshipped these fictitious deities with various rites ; they considered them as widely different from each other in sex, and power, in their nature, and also in their respective offices, and they appeased them by a multiplicity of ceremonies and offerings, in order to obtain their protection and favour. So that, however different the degrees of enormity might be, with which this

All sunk in
superstition.

^e See Jo. Massoni *Templum Jani, Christo nascente, referatum*. Roterodami, 1706.

^f *Fere omniaque imperia*, says Seneca, *penes eos fuisse populos, qui meliorem cælo utuntur ; in frigora, septentrionemque vergentibus immanis ingenia sunt, ut ait poeta, quoque simillima cælo*. Seneca *De Ira*, lib. ii. cap. xvi. tom. i. *Opp. Edit. Gronovii*.

absurd and impious theology appeared in different countries; yet there was no nation, whose sacred rites and whose religious worship did not discover a manifest abuse of reason, and very striking marks of extravagance and folly.

VII. Every nation then had its respective gods, over which presided one more excellent than the rest; but not of the same kind. yet in such a manner, that this supreme deity was himself controlled by the rigid empire of the fates, or what the philosophers called *eternal necessity*. The gods of the east were different from those of the Gauls, the Germans, and the other northern nations. The Grecian divinities differed widely from those of the Egyptians, who deified plants, animals, and a great variety of the productions both of nature and art.^g Each people also had their own particular manner of worshipping and appeasing their respective deities, entirely different from the sacred rites of other countries. In process of time, however, the Greeks and Romans grew as ambitious in their religious pretensions, as in their political claims. They maintained that *their* gods, though under different names, were the objects of religious worship in all nations, and therefore they gave the names of their deities to those of other countries. This pretension, whether supported by ignorance or other means, introduced inexpressible darkness and perplexity into the history of the ancient superstitions, and has been also the

^g See the discourse, of Athanasius, entitled, *Oratio contra Gentes*, in the first volume of his works.

[^h] This fact renders a satisfactory account of the vast number of gods who bore the name of Jupiter, and the multitudes that passed under those of Mercury, Venus, Hercules, Juno, &c. The Greeks, when they found, in other countries, deities that resembled their own, persuaded the worshippers of these foreign gods, that their deities were the same that were honoured in Greece, and were, indeed, convinced themselves that this was the case. In consequence of this, the Greeks gave the names of their gods to those of other nations, and the Romans in this followed their example. Hence we find the names of Jupiter, Mars, Mercury, Venus, &c. frequently mentioned in the more recent monuments and inscriptions which have been found among the Gauls and Germans, though the ancient inhabitants of those countries worshipped no gods under such denominations. I cannot think that this method of the Greeks and Romans has introduced so much confusion into mythology as Dr. Mosheim here imagines. If indeed there was no resemblance between the Greek and Roman deities, and those of other nations, and if the names of the deities of the former had been given to those of the latter in an arbitrary and undistinguishable manner, the reflection of our historian would be undeniably true. But it has been alleged by many learned men, and that with a high degree of probability, that the principal deities of all nations resembled each other extremely in their essential characters; and, if so, their receiving the same names could not introduce much confusion into mythology, since they were probably derived from one common source. If the Thor of the ancient Celts was the same in dignity, character, and attributes, with the Jupiter of the Greeks and Romans, where was the impropriety of giving the same name?

occasion of innumerable errors in the writings of the learned.

VIII. One thing, indeed, which at first sight appears very remarkable, is, that this variety of religions and of gods neither produced wars nor dissensions among the different nations, the Egyptians excepted.ⁱ Nor is it, perhaps, necessary to except even them, since their wars undertaken for their gods cannot be looked upon with propriety as wholly of a religious nature.^k Each nation suffered its neighbours to follow their own method of worship, to adore their own gods, to enjoy their own rites and ceremonies, and discovered no sort of displeasure at their diversity of sentiments in religious matters. There is, however, little wonderful in this spirit of mutual toleration, when we consider that they all looked upon the world as one great empire, divided into various provinces, over every one of which a certain order of divinities presided; and that, therefore, none could behold with contempt the gods of other nations, or force strangers to pay homage to theirs. The Romans exercised this toleration in the amplest manner. For though they would not allow any changes to be made in the religions that were publicly professed in the empire, nor any new form of worship to be openly introduced; yet they granted to their citizens a full liberty of observing, in private, the sacred rites of other nations, and of honouring foreign deities, whose worship contained nothing inconsistent with the interests and laws of the republic, with feasts, temples, consecrated groves, and such like testimonies of homage and respect.

No wars nor dissensions occasioned by this variety of religions.

IX. The deities of almost all nations were either ancient heroes, renowned for noble exploits and worthy deeds, or kings and generals who had founded empires, or women become illustrious by remarkable actions or useful inventions. The merit of these distinguished and eminent persons, contemplated by their posterity with an enthusiastic gratitude, was the reason of

Most of their gods were de-parted heroes.

ⁱ There are ingenious things to be found upon this head in the *Expositio Mensæ Tisiacæ* of Pignorius, p. 41.

^k The religious wars of the Egyptians were not undertaken to compel others to adopt their worship, but to avenge the slaughter that was made of their gods, viz. crocodiles, &c. by the neighbouring nations. They were not offended at their neighbours for serving other divinities, but could not bear that they should put theirs to death.

^l See concerning this interesting subject, a very curious and learned treatise of the famous Bynckershoek, entitled, *Dissertatio de cultu peregrinæ religionis apud Romanos*. This dissertation is to be found in the *Opuscula* of that excellent author, which were published at Leyden in 4to. in the year 1719.

their being exalted to celestial honours. The natural world furnished another kind of deities, that were added to these by some nations. And as the sun, moon, and stars shine forth with a lustre superior to that of all other material beings; so it is certain that they particularly attracted the attention of mankind, and received religious homage from almost all the nations of the world.^m From these beings of a nobler kind, idolatry descended into an enormous multiplication of inferior powers; so that in many countries, mountains, trees, and rivers, the earth, the sea, and the winds, nay, even virtues, vices, and diseases had their shrines attended by devout and zealous worshippers."

x. These deities were honoured with rites and sacrifices of various kinds, according to their respective nature and offices.ⁿ The rites used in their worship were absurd and ridiculous, and frequently cruel and obscene. Most nations offered animals, and some proceeded to the enormity of human sacrifices. As to their prayers, they were void of piety and sense, both with respect to their matter and their form.^p Pontiffs, priests, and ministers, distributed into several classes, presided in this strange worship, and were appointed to prevent disorder in the performance of the sacred rites. This *order*, which was supposed to be distinguished by an immediate intercourse and friendship with the gods, abused their authority in the basest manner, to deceive an ignorant and wretched people.

The worship paid to these deities.

¶ ^m The ingenious editor of the Ruins of Balbec has given us, in the preface to that noble work, a very curious account of the origin of the religious worship that was offered to the heavenly bodies by the Syrians and Arabians. In those uncomfortable deserts, where the *day* presents nothing to the view, but the uniform, tedious, and melancholy prospect of barren sands, the *night* discloses a most delightful and magnificent spectacle, and appears arrayed with charms of the most attractive kind; for the most part unclouded and serene, it exhibits to the wondering eye the *host of heaven*, in all their amazing variety and glory. In the view of this stupendous scene, the transition from admiration to idolatry was too easy to uninstructed minds; and a people, whose climate offered no beauties to contemplate but those of the firmament, would naturally look thither for the objects of their worship. The form of idolatry, in Greece, was different from that of the Syrians; and Mr. Wood ingeniously attributes this to that smiling and variegated scene of mountains, vallies, rivers, groves, woods, and fountains, which the transported imagination, in the midst of its pleasing astonishment, supposed to be the seats of invisible deities. See a further account of this matter in the elegant work above mentioned.

ⁿ See the learned work of J. G. Vossius, *De Idolatria*.

^o See J. Saubertus, *De Sacrificiis veterum*. Lug. Bat. 1699.

^p See M. Brouerius a Niedeck, *De adorationibus veterum populorum*, printed at Utrecht, in 8vo. in the year 1711.

XI. The religious worship we have now been considering, was confined to stated *times* and *places*. The statues and other representations of the gods were placed in the temples,¹ and supposed to be animated in an incomprehensible manner. For the votaries of these fictitious deities, however destitute they might be of reason in other respects, avoided carefully the imputation of worshipping inanimate beings, such as brass, wood, and stone, and therefore pretended that the divinity represented by the statue, was really present in it, if the dedication was duly and properly made.²

Confined to
stated times
and places.

XII. But, beside the public worship of the gods, to which all without exception were admitted, there were certain religious institutions and rites celebrated in secret by the Greeks and several eastern nations, to which a very small number were allowed access. These were commonly called *mysteries*; and the persons who desired to be initiated therein, were obliged previously to exhibit satisfactory proofs of their fidelity and patience, by passing through various trials and ceremonies of the most disagreeable kind. The secret of these institutions was kept in the strictest manner, as the initiated could not reveal any thing that passed in them without exposing their lives to the most imminent danger; and that is the reason why, at this time, we are so little acquainted with the true nature and the real design of these hidden rites. It is, however, well known, that, in some of those *mysteries*, many things were transacted that were contrary both to real modesty and outward decency. And indeed, from the whole of the pagan rites, the intelligent few might easily learn, that the divinities generally worshipped, were rather men famous for their vices, than distinguished by virtuous and worthy deeds.³

Mysteries.

XIII. It is at least certain, that this religion had not the least influence toward the exciting or nourishing solid and true virtue in the minds of men. For the gods and goddesses, to whom public homage

No tendency
in paganism
to promote
virtue.

¶ 9 Some nations were without temples, such as the Persians, Gauls, Germans, and Britons, who performed their religious worship in the open air, or in the shady retreats of consecrated groves.

¹ See Arnobius *adv. Gentes*, lib. vi. p. 254, according to the edition of Heraldus. See also Augustin *De civitate Dei*, lib. vii. cap. xxxiii. and the *Misopogon* of the emperor Julian, p. 361, according to the edition of Spanheim.

² See Clarkson on the *Liturgies*, § iv. p. 36, as also Meursius, *De mysteriis Eleusiniis*.

³ See Cicero *Disput. Tusculan.* lib. ii. cap. xiii.

was paid, exhibited to their worshippers rather examples of egregious crimes, than of useful and illustrious virtues." The gods, moreover, were esteemed superior to men in power and immortality; but in every thing else, they were considered as their equals. The priests were little solicitous to animate the people to a virtuous conduct, either by their precepts or their example; nay, they plainly enough declared, that all that was essential to the true worship of the gods, was contained only in the rites and institutions which the people had received by tradition from their ancestors.^w And as to what regarded the rewards of virtue, and the punishment of vice after this present life, the general notions were partly uncertain, partly licentious, and often more proper to administer indulgence to vice, than encouragement to virtue. Hence the wiser part of mankind, about the time of Christ's birth, looked upon this whole system of religion as a just object of ridicule and contempt.

XIV. The consequences of this wretched theology were a universal corruption of manners, which discovered itself in the impunity of the most flagitious crimes.^x Juvenal and Persius among the Latins, and Lucian among the Greeks, bear testimony to the justice of this heavy accusation. It is also well known, that no public law prohibited the sports of the gladiators, the exercise of unnatural lusts, the licentiousness of divorce, the custom of exposing infants, and of procuring abortions, nor the frontless atrocity of consecrating publicly stews and brothels to certain divinities.^y

^u There is a very remarkable passage to this purpose in the *Tristia* of Ovid, book the second, beginning at line 287.

"Quis locus est templis augustior? hæc quoque vitet.
In culpam si quæ est ingeniosa suam.
Cum steterit Jovis æde; Jovis succurret in æde,
Quam multas matres fecerit ille Deus.
Proxima adoranti Junonia templa subibit,
Pellicibus multis hanc doluisse Deam.
Pallade conspecta, natum de crimine virgo
Sustulerit quare, quæret Erichonium."

^w See Barbeyrac's preface to his French translation of Puffendorf's *System of the Law of Nature and Nations*, § vi. p. 21, of the last edition.

^x The corrupt manners of those who lay in the darkness of idolatry are described, in an ample and affecting manner, in the first of Cyprian's epistles. See also on this subject Cornel. Adami *Exercitatio de malis Romanorum ante prædicationem Evangelii moribus*. This is the fifth discourse of a collection published by that learned writer at Groningen, 1712, in 4to.

^y See Dr. John Leland's excellent account of the religious sentiments, moral conduct, and future prospects of the pagans, in his large work entitled, *The Advantage and Necessity of the Christian Revelation*.

xv. Such as were not sunk in an unaccountable and brutish stupidity, perceived the deformity of these religious systems. To these the crafty priests addressed two considerations, to prevent their incredulity, and to dispel their doubts. The first was drawn from the miracles and prodigies which they pretended were daily wrought in the temples, before the statues of the gods and the heroes that were placed there; and the second was deduced from oracles and divination, by which they maintained that the secrets of futurity were unfolded through the interposition of the gods. In both these points the cunning of the priests imposed miserably upon the ignorance of the people; and if the discerning few saw the cheat, they were obliged, from a regard to their own safety, to laugh with caution, since the priests were even ready to accuse, before a raging and superstitious multitude, those who discovered their religious frauds, as rebels against the majesty of the immortal gods.

The arguments of the priests in defence of paganism.

xvi. At the time of Christ's appearance upon earth, the religion of the Romans, as well as their arms, had extended itself through a great part of the world. This religion must be known to those who are acquainted with the Grecian superstitions.² In some things, indeed, it differs from them; for the Romans, beside the institutions which Numa and others had invented with political views, added several Italic and Hettrurian fictions to the Grecian fables, and gave also to the Egyptian deities a place among their own.

The religion of the Greeks and Romans.

xvii. In the provinces subjected to the Roman government, there arose a new kind of religion, formed by a mixture of the ancient rites of the conquered nations with those of the Romans. These nations who, before their subjection, had their own gods, and their own particular religious institutions, were persuaded, by degrees, to admit into their worship a great number of the sacred rites and customs of their conquerors. The view of the Romans in this change, was not only to confirm their authority by the powerful aid of religion, but also to abolish the inhuman rites which were performed by many of the barbarous nations who had received their yoke; and this change was effected partly by the prudence of the victors, partly by the levity

The Romans introduced their own rites among those of the conquered nations.

² See Dionysius Halicarn. *Antiq. Rom.* lib. vii. cap. lxxii. p. 460, tom. i. Edit. Hudson.

^a See Petit *ad leges Atticas*, lib. i. tit. i. p. 71.

of the vanquished, and by their ambition to please their new masters.

XVIII. When, from the sacred rites of the ancient Romans, we pass to a review of the other religions that prevailed in the world, we shall find that the most remarkable may be properly divided into two classes, of which the one will comprehend the religious systems which owe their existence to *political* views; and the other, those which seemed to have been formed for *military* purposes. In the former class may be ranked the religions of most of the eastern nations, especially of the Persians, Egyptians, and Indians, which appear to have been solely calculated for the preservation of the state, the supporting of the royal authority and grandeur, the maintenance of public peace, and the advancement of civil virtues. Under the *military* class may be comprehended the religious system of the northern nations; since all the traditions that we find among the Germans, the Britons, the Celts, and the Goths, concerning their divinities, have a manifest tendency to excite and nourish fortitude and ferocity, an insensibility of danger, and a contempt of life. An attentive inquiry into the religions of these respective nations, will abundantly verify what is here asserted.

XIX. None of these nations indeed ever arrived at such an access of universal barbarity and ignorance, as not to have some discerning men among them, who were sensible of the extravagance of all these religions. But of these sagacious observers some were destitute of the weight and authority that were necessary to remedy these overgrown evils; and others wanted the will to exert themselves in such a glorious cause. And the truth is, none of them had wisdom equal to such a solemn and arduous enterprise. This appears manifestly from the laborious, but useless efforts of some of the Greek and Roman philosophers against the vulgar superstitions. These venerable sages delivered in their writings many sublime things concerning the nature of God, and the duties incumbent upon men; they disputed with sagacity against the popular religion; but to all this they added such chimerical notions, and such absurd subtleties of their own, as may serve to convince us, that it belongs to God alone, and not to man, to reveal the truth without any mixture of impurity or error.

Systems of religion different from that of the Romans.

The wiser among the heathens could not remedy these evils.

XX. About the time of Christ's appearance upon earth, there were two kinds of philosophy which prevailed among the civilized nations. One was the philosophy of the Greeks, adopted also by the Romans; and the other, that of the orientals, which had a great number of votaries in Persia, Syria, Chaldea, Egypt, and even among the Jews. The former was distinguished by the simple title of *philosophy*. The latter was honoured with the more pompous appellation of *science* or *knowledge*,^b since those who embraced this latter sect pretended to be the restorers of the knowledge of God, which was lost in the world.^c The followers of both these systems, in consequence of vehement disputes and dissensions about several points, subdivided themselves into a variety of sects. It is, however, to be observed, that all the sects of the oriental philosophy deduced their various tenets from one fundamental principle, which they held in common; whereas the Greeks were much divided even about the first principles of science.

Two kinds of philosophy prevailed at the time of Christ's birth.

As we shall have occasion hereafter to speak of the oriental philosophy, we shall confine ourselves here to the doctrines taught by the Grecian sages, and shall give some account of the various sects into which they were divided.

XXI. Among the Grecian sects, there were some which declared openly against all religion; and others, who, though they acknowledged a deity, and admitted a religion, yet cast a cloud over the truth, instead of exhibiting it in its genuine beauty and lustre.

Some of the Grecian systems subversive of all piety.

Of the former kind were the epicureans and academics. The epicureans maintained, "that the world arose from chance; that the gods, whose existence they did not dare to deny, neither did, nor could, extend their providential care to human affairs; that the soul was mortal; that *pleasure*^d was to be regarded as the ultimate end of man;

^b *Γνωσις*, *gnosis*, in the Greek, signifies *science* or *knowledge*, and from hence came the title of gnostics, which this presumptuous sect claimed as due to their superior light and penetration in divine things.

^c St. Paul mentions and condemns both these kinds of philosophy; the Greek, in the *Epistle to the Colossians*, ii. 8, and the oriental, or *gnosis*, in the *First Epistle to Timothy*, vi. 20.

^d The ambiguity of the word *pleasure* has produced many disputes in the explication of the epicurean system. If, by *pleasure*, be understood only *sensual* gratifications, the tenet here advanced is indisputably monstrous. But if it be taken in a larger sense, and extended to intellectual and moral objects; in what does the scheme of Epicurus, with respect to virtue, differ from the opinions of those Christian philosophers, who maintain that self-love is the *only* spring of all human affections and actions?

and that *virtue* was neither worthy of esteem nor choice, but with a view to its attainment. The academics asserted the impossibility of arriving at truth, and held it uncertain, “whether the gods existed or not; whether the soul was mortal or immortal; whether virtue were preferable to vice, or vice to virtue.” These two sects, though they struck at the foundations of all religion, were the most numerous of all others at the birth of Christ, and were particularly encouraged by the liberality of the rich, and the protection of those in power.^e

XXII. We observed in the preceding section, that there was another kind of philosophy, in which religion was admitted, but which was, at the same time, deficient by the obscurity it cast upon truth.

Others corrupted the truth.
The Aristotelians.

Under the philosophers of this class, may be reckoned the platonists, the stoics, and the followers of Aristotle, whose subtile disputations concerning God, religion, and the social duties, were of little solid use to mankind. The nature of God, as it is explained by Aristotle, is something like the principle that gives motion to a machine; it is a nature happy in the contemplation of itself, and entirely regardless of human affairs; and such a divinity, who differs but little from the god of Epicurus, cannot reasonably be the object either of love or fear. With respect to the doctrine of this philosopher concerning the human soul, it is uncertain, to say no more, whether he believed its immortality or not.^f What then could be expected from such a philosophy? could any thing solid and satisfactory, in favour of piety and virtue, be hoped for from a system which excluded from the universe a divine Providence, and insinuated the mortality of the human soul?

XXIII. The god of the stoics has somewhat more majesty, than the divinity of Aristotle; nor is he represented by those philosophers as sitting above the

^e That of the epicureans was, however, the most numerous of the two, as appears from the testimony of Cicero, *De finibus*, &c. lib. i. cap. vii. lib. ii. cap. xiv. *Disput. Tusculan.* lib. v. cap. x. Hence the complaint which Juvenal makes in his xiiith Satire, of the atheism that prevailed at Rome, in those excellent words:

“Sunt in fortunæ qui casibus omnia ponunt,
Et nullo credunt mundum rectore moveri,
Natura volvente vices et lucis et anni;
Atque ideo intrepidi quæcunque altaria tangunt.”

¶ See the notes upon Cudworth's *Intellectual System of the Universe*, which Dr. Mosheim subjoined to his Latin translation of that learned work, vol. i. p. 66, 500, vol. ii. p. 1171. See also upon the same subject, Mourgue's *Plan Théologique du Pythagorisme*, tom. i. p. 79

starry heavens in a supine indolence, and a perfect inattention to the affairs of the universe. Yet he is described as a corporeal being, united to matter by a necessary connexion, and subject to the determinations of an immutable *fate*, so that neither rewards nor punishments can properly proceed from him.^a The learned also know that, in the philosophy of this sect, the existence of the soul was confined to a certain period of time. Now it is manifest, that these tenets remove, at once, the strongest motives to virtue, and the most powerful restraints upon vice; and, therefore, the stoical system may be considered as a body of specious and pompous doctrine, but, at the same time, as a body without nerves, or any principles of consistence and vigour.

xxiv. Plato is generally looked upon as superior to all the other philosophers in wisdom; and this eminent rank does not seem to have been undeserv-^{The Platonics.} edly conferred upon him. He taught that the universe was governed by a being, glorious in power and wisdom, and possessed of a perfect liberty and independence. He extended also the views of mortals beyond the grave, and showed them, in futurity, prospects adapted to excite their hopes, and to work upon their fears. His doctrine, however, beside the weakness of the foundations on which it rests, and the obscurity with which it is often expressed, has likewise many other considerable defects. It represents the Supreme Creator of the world as destitute of many perfections,^b and confined to a certain determinate portion of space. Its decisions, with respect to the soul,

[F] ^g Thus is the stoical doctrine of *fate* generally represented: but not more generally than unjustly. Their *fatum*, when carefully and attentively examined, seems to have signified no more, in the intention of the wisest of that sect, than the plan of government formed originally in the divine mind, a plan all wise and perfect; and from which, of consequence, the Supreme Being, morally speaking, can never depart. So that when Jupiter is said by the stoics to be subject to immutable *fate*, this means no more than that he is subject to the wisdom of his own counsels, and acts ever in conformity with his supreme perfections. The following remarkable passage of Seneca, drawn from the fifth chapter of his book *De Providentia*, is sufficient to confirm the explication we have here given of the stoical *fate*. "Ille ipse omnium conditor et rector scripsit quidem fata, sed sequitur. Semper paret, semel jussit."

[F] ^h This accusation seems to be carried too far by Dr. Mosheim. It is not strictly true, that the doctrine of Plato represents the Supreme Being as destitute of many perfections. On the contrary, all the divine perfections are frequently acknowledged by that philosopher. What probably gave occasion to this animadversion of our learned author, was the erroneous notion of Plato, concerning the invincible malignity and corruption of matter, which the divine power had not been sufficient to reduce entirely to order. Though this notion is, indeed, injurious to the omnipotence of God, yet it is not sufficient to justify the censure now under consideration.

and demons, are too much adapted to beget and nourish superstition. Nor will the moral philosophy of Plato appear worthy of such a high degree of admiration, if we attentively examine and compare together its various parts, and reduce them to their principles.ⁱ

xxv. As then, in these different sects, there were many things maintained that were highly unreasonable and absurd; and as a contentious spirit of opposition and dispute prevailed among them all; certain men of true discernment, and of moderate characters, were of opinion, that none of these sects were to be adhered to in all matters, but that it was rather wise to choose and extract out of each of them such tenets and doctrines as were good and reasonable, and to abandon and reject the rest. This gave rise to a new form of philosophy in Egypt, and principally at Alexandria, which was called the eclectic, whose founder, according to some, was Pota-mon, an Alexandrian, though this opinion is not without its difficulties. It appears manifestly from the testimony of Philo the Jew, who was himself one of this sect, that this philosophy was in a flourishing state at Alexandria, when our Saviour was upon the earth. The eclectics held Plato in the highest esteem, though they made no scruple to join with his doctrines, whatever they thought conformable to reason in the tenets and opinions of the other philosophers.^k

xxvi. The attentive reader will easily conclude, from the short view that we have here given of the miserable state of the world at the birth of Christ, that mankind, in this period of darkness and corruption, stood highly in need of some divine teacher to convey to the mind *true and certain principles* of religion and wisdom, and to recall wandering mortals to the sublime paths of piety and virtue. The consideration of this wretched condition of mankind will be also singularly useful to those who are not sufficiently acquainted with the advantages, the comforts, and the support, which the sublime doctrines of Christianity are so proper to administer in every state, relation, and circumstance of life. A set of

The use of the foregoing chapter.

ⁱ There is an ample account of the defects of the Platonic philosophy in a work, entitled, *Defenses des Peres accusés de Platonisme*, par Franc. Baltus; but there is more learning than accuracy in that performance.

^k See God of Olearius, *De Philosophia Eclectica*. Jac. Brucker, and others

miserable and unthinking creatures treat with negligence, nay sometimes with contempt, the religion of Jesus, not considering that they are indebted to it for all the good things which they so ungratefully enjoy.

CHAPTER II.

CONCERNING THE CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS STATE OF THE JEWISH NATION AT THE BIRTH OF CHRIST.

I. THE state of the Jews was not much better than that of the other nations at the time of Christ's appearance in the world. They were governed by Herod, who was himself a tributary to the Roman people. This prince was surnamed the Great, surely from no other circumstance than the greatness of his vices, and his government was a yoke of the most vexatious and oppressive kind. By a cruel, suspicious and overbearing temper, he drew upon himself the aversion of all, not excepting those who lived upon his bounty. By a mad luxury and an affectation of magnificence far above his fortune, together with the most profuse and immoderate largesses, he exhausted the treasures of that miserable nation. Under his administration, and by his means, the Roman luxury was received in Palestine, accompanied with the worst vices of that licentious people.¹ In a word, Judea, governed by Herod, groaned under all that corruption, which might be expected from the authority and the example of a prince, who, though a Jew in outward profession, was, in point of morals and practice, a contemner of all laws human and divine.

The Jews governed by Herod the Great.

II. After the death of this tyrant, the Romans divided the government of Palestine between his sons. In this division the one half of Judea was given to Archelaus, with the title of exarch; and the other was divided between his two brothers, Antipas and Philip. Archelaus was a corrupt and wicked prince, and followed the example of his father's crimes in such a manner, that the Jews, grown weary of his iniquitous admi-

The state of Judea after the death of Herod.

¹ See on this subject, Christ. Noldii *Historia Idumæa*, which is annexed to Havercamp's edition of *Josephus*, vol. ii. p. 333. See also Basnage, *Histoire des Juifs*, tom. i. part i. p. 27. Noris, *Cenotaph. Pisan.* Prideaux, *History of the Jews*. Cellarius, his *Historia Herodum*, in the first part of his *Academical Dissertations*, p. 207: and above all, Josephus the Jewish historian.

nistration, laid their complaints and grievances before Augustus, who delivered them from their oppressor, by banishing him from his dominions, about ten years after the death of Herod the Great. The kingdom of this dethroned prince was reduced to the form of a province, and added to the jurisdiction of the governor of Syria, to the great detriment of the Jews, whose heaviest calamities were owing to this change, and whose final destruction was its undoubted effect in the appointment of Providence.

III. However severe the authority was, which the Romans exercised over the Jews, yet it did not extend to the entire suppression of all their civil and religious privileges. The Jews were, in some measure, governed by their own laws, and they were permitted the enjoyment of the religion they had received from the glorious founder of their church and state. The administration of religious ceremonies was committed, as before, to the high-priest, and to the sanhedrim; to the former of whom the order of the priests and Levites was in the usual subordination; and the form of outward worship, except in a very few points, had suffered no visible change. But, on the other hand, it is impossible to express the inquietude and disgust, the calamities and vexations which this unhappy nation suffered from the presence of the Romans, whom their religion obliged them to look upon as a polluted and idolatrous people, and in a more particular manner, from the avarice and cruelty of the pretors, and the frauds and extortions of the publicans. So that all things considered, their condition, who lived under the government of the other sons of Herod, was much more supportable than the state of those, who were immediately subject to the Roman jurisdiction.

IV. It was not, however, from the Romans alone, that the calamities of this miserable people proceeded. Their own rulers multiplied their vexations, and hindered them from enjoying any little comforts that were left to them by the Roman magistrates. The leaders of the people, and the chief priests, were, according to the account of Josephus, profligate wretches, who had purchased their places by bribes, or by acts of iniquity, and who maintained their ill acquired authority by the most flagitious and abominable crimes. The subordinate and inferior members were infected with the corruption of the head; the priests, and those who possessed

The calamities that fell upon the Jewish nation.

These calamities increased by the priests and rulers of the Jewish nation.

any shadow of authority, were become dissolute and abandoned to the highest degree; while the multitude, set on by these corrupt examples, ran headlong into every sort of iniquity, and by their endless seditions, robberies, and extortions, armed against them both the justice of God, and the vengeance of men.

v. Two religions flourished at this time in Palestine, viz. the Jewish and the Samaritan, whose respective followers beheld those of the opposite sect with the utmost aversion. The Jewish religion stands exposed to our view in the books of the Old Testament; but at the time of Christ's appearance, it had lost much of its original nature, and of its primitive aspect. Errors of a very pernicious kind had infected the whole body of the people, and the more learned part of the nation were divided upon points of the highest consequence. All looked for a deliverer, but not for such a one as God had promised. Instead of a meek and spiritual Saviour, they expected a formidable and warlike prince, to break off their chains, and set them at liberty from the Roman yoke. All regarded the whole of religion, as consisting in the rites appointed by Moses, and in the performance of some external acts of duty toward the Gentiles. They were all horribly unanimous in excluding from the hopes of eternal life all the other nations of the world; and, as a consequence of this odious system, they treated them with the utmost rigour and inhumanity, when any occasion was offered them. And beside these corrupt and vicious principles, there prevailed among them several absurd and superstitious notions concerning the divine nature, invisible powers, magic, &c. which they had partly brought with them from the Babylonian captivity, and partly derived from the Egyptians, Syrians, and Arabians, who lived in their neighbourhood.

The Jewish religion much corrupted among the multitude.

vi. Religion had not a better fate among the learned than among the multitude. The supercilious doctors, who vaunted their profound knowledge of the law, and their deep science in spiritual and divine things, were constantly showing their fallibility and their ignorance by their religious differences, and were divided into a great variety of sects. Of these sects three have, in a great measure, eclipsed the rest, both by the number of their adherents, and also by the weight and authority which they acquired. These were the

And also among the doctors, who were divided into various sects.

Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Essenes.^m There is frequent mention made of the two former in the sacred writings; but the knowledge of the rites and doctrines of the latter is to be derived from Josephus, Philo, and other historians. These three illustrious sects agreed in the fundamental principles of the Jewish religion, while at the same time, they were involved in endless disputes upon points of the highest importance, and about matters in which the salvation of mankind was directly concerned; and their controversies could not but be highly detrimental to the rude and illiterate multitude, as every one must easily perceive.

The three famous Jewish sects divided upon various points; VII. It may not be improper to mention here some of the principal matters that were debated among these famous sects. One of the main points of controversy was; *whether the WRITTEN LAW alone was of divine authority.* The Pharisees added to this *law* another, which had been received by oral tradition. This the Sadducees and Essenes rejected as of no authority, and adhered to the *written law* as the only divine rule of obedience. They differed also in their opinions concerning the true *sense of the law.* For, while the Pharisees attributed to the sacred text a double sense, one of which was obvious, regarding only the *words*, and another mysterious, relating to the intimate nature of the *things* expressed; and while the Sadducees maintained that nothing further was delivered by the law, than that which was contained in the signification of the words; the Essenes, at least the greatest part of that sect, entertained an opinion different from both of these. They asserted, in their jargon, that the words of the law were absolutely void of all power, and that the things expressed by them, were the images of holy and celestial objects. These litigious subtilties and unintelligible wranglings, about the nature and sense of the divine word, were succeeded by a controversy of the greatest moment, concerning the rewards and punishments of the law, particularly with respect to their extent. The Pharisees were of opinion, that these rewards and punishments extended both to the soul and body, and that their duration was prolonged beyond the

^m Beside these more illustrious sects, there were several of inferior note, which prevailed among the Jews at the time of Christ's appearance. The Herodians are mentioned by the sacred writers, the Gaulonites by Josephus, and others by Epiphanius and Hegesippus in Eusebius; nor is it rational to look upon these sects as fictitious.

limits of this transitory state. The Sadducees assigned to them the same period that concludes this mortal life. The Essenes differed from both; and maintained that future rewards and punishments extended to the soul alone, and not to the body, which they considered as a mass of malignant matter, and as the prison of the immortal spirit.

VIII. These differences, in matters of such vast consequence, between the three famous sects above mentioned, produced none of those injurious and malignant effects, which are too often seen to arise from religious controversies. But such as ^{but exercised reciprocal toleration toward each other.} have any acquaintance with the history of these times, will not be so far deceived by this specious appearance of moderation, as to attribute it to noble or generous principles. They will look through the fair outside, and see that their mutual fears of each other were the latent reason of this apparent charity and mutual forbearance. The Sadducees enjoyed the favour and protection of the great. The Pharisees, on the other hand, were extremely high in the esteem of the multitude. And hence they were both secured against the attempts of each other, and lived in peace, notwithstanding the diversity of their religious sentiments. The government of the Romans contributed also to the maintenance of this mutual toleration and tranquillity, as they were ever ready to suppress and punish whatever had the appearance of tumult and sedition. We may add to all this, that the Sadducean principles rendered that sect naturally averse to all sorts of altercation and tumult. Libertinism has for its objects ease and pleasure, and chooses rather to slumber in the arms of a fallacious security, than to expose itself to the painful activity, which is required both in the search and in the defence of truth.

IX. The Essenes had little occasion to quarrel with the other sects, as they dwelt generally in a rural solitude, far removed from the view and commerce ^{Essenes.} of men. This singular sect, which was spread abroad through Syria, Egypt, and the neighbouring countries, maintained, that religion consisted wholly in contemplation and silence. By a rigorous abstinence also, and a variety of penitential exercises and mortifications, which they seem to have borrowed from the Egyptians,ⁿ they endea-

ⁿ See the annotations of Holstenius to Porphyry's Life of Pythagoras, p. 11. of the edition published by Kuster.

voured to arrive at still higher degrees of perfection in virtue. There prevailed, however, among the members of this sect, a considerable difference both in point of opinion and discipline. Some passed their lives in a state of celibacy, and employed their time in educating and instructing the children of others. Others embraced the state of matrimony, which they considered as lawful, when entered into with the sole design of propagating the species, and not to satisfy the demands of lust. Those of the Essenes who dwelt in Syria, held the possibility of appeasing the Deity by sacrifices, though in a manner quite different from that of the Jews; by which, however, it appears that they had not utterly rejected the literal sense of the Mosaic law. But those who wandered in the deserts of Egypt were of very different sentiments; they maintained, that no offering was acceptable to God but that of a serene and composed mind, addicted to the contemplation of divine things; and it is manifest from hence, that they looked upon the law of Moses as an allegorical system of spiritual and mysterious truths, and renounced in its explication all regard to the outward letter."

x. The Therapeutæ, of whom Philo the Jew makes particular mention in his treatise concerning *contemplative life*, are supposed to have been a branch of this sect. From this notion arose the division of the Essenes into *theoretical* and *practical*. The former of these were wholly devoted to contemplation, and are the same with the Therapeutæ; while the latter employed a part of their time in the performance of the duties of active life. Whether this division be accurate or not, is a matter which I will not take upon me to determine. But I see nothing in the laws or manners of the Therapeutæ, that should lead us to consider them as a branch of the Essenes; nor indeed has Philo asserted any such thing. There may have been, surely, many other fanatical tribes among the Jews, beside that of the Essenes; nor should a resemblance of principles always induce us to make a coalition of sects. It is however, certain, that the Therapeutæ were neither Christians nor Egyptians, as some have erroneously imagined. They were undoubtedly Jews; nay, they gloried in that title, and styled themselves, with particular affectation, the true disciples of Moses, though their manner of life was

o See Mosheim's observations on a small treatise of the learned Cudworth's concerning the true notion of the Lord's Supper, p. 1.

equally repugnant to the institutions of that great lawgiver and to the dictates of right reason, and showed them to be a tribe of melancholy and wrongheaded enthusiasts.

XI. None of these sects, indeed, seemed to have the interests of real and true piety at heart; nor were their principles and discipline at all adapted to the advancement of pure and substantial virtue.

The moral doctrine of these sects

The Pharisees courted popular applause by a vain ostentation of pretended sanctity, and an austere method of living, while in reality they were strangers to true holiness, and were inwardly defiled with the most criminal dispositions, with which our Saviour frequently reproaches them. They also treated with more veneration the commandments and traditions of men, than the sacred precepts and laws of God.^a The Sadducees, by denying a future state of rewards and punishments, removed, at once, the most powerful incentives to virtue, and the most effectual restraints upon vice, and thus gave new vigour to every sinful passion, and a full encouragement to the indulgence of every irregular desire. As to the Essenes, they were a fanatical and superstitious tribe, who placed religion in a certain sort of seraphic indolence, and, looking upon piety to God as incompatible with any social attachment to men, dissolved, by this pernicious doctrine, all the great bonds of human society.

XII. While then such darkness, such errors and dissensions prevailed among those, who assumed the character and authority of persons distinguished by their superior sanctity and wisdom, it will not be difficult to imagine, how totally corrupt the religion and morals of the multitude must have been. They were, accordingly, sunk in the most deplorable ignorance of God, and of divine things; and had no notion of any other way of rendering themselves acceptable to the Supreme Being, than by sacrifices, washings, and the other external rites and ceremonies of the Mosaic law. Hence proceeded that dissolution of manners, and that profligate wickedness, which prevailed among the Jews, during Christ's ministry upon earth. And hence the Divine Saviour compares that people to a flock of sheep,

The multitude sunk in superstition, and corruption.

^a The principal writers, who have given accounts of the Therapeutæ, are mentioned by Jo. Albert Fabricius in the ivth chapter of his *Lux Salutaris Evangelii toto orbi exorients*, p. 55.

^a Matt. xxiii. 13, 14, &c.

which wandered without a shepherd; and their doctors to men, who, though deprived themselves of sight, yet pretended to show the way to others.'

XIII. To all these corruptions, both in point of doctrine and practice, which reigned among the Jews at the time of Christ's coming, we may add the attachment which many of them discovered to the tenets of the oriental philosophy concerning the origin of the world, and to the doctrine of the Cabbala, which was undoubtedly derived from thence. That considerable numbers of the Jews had imbibed the errors of this fantastic system, appears evidently, both from the books of the New Testament, and from the ancient history of the Christian church; and it is also certain, that many of the Gnostic sects were founded by Jews. Those among that degenerate people, who adopted this chimerical philosophy, must have differed vastly from the rest in their opinions concerning the God of the Old Testament, the origin of the world, the character and doctrine of Moses, and the nature and ministry of the Messiah; since they maintained, that the Creator of this world was a being different from the Supreme God, and that his dominion over the human race was to be destroyed by the Messiah. Every one must see that this enormous system was fruitful of errors, destructive of the very foundations of Judaism.

XIV. If any part of the Jewish religion was less disfigured and corrupted than the rest, it was certainly the form of external worship which was established by the law of Moses. And yet many learned men have observed, that a great variety of rites were introduced into the service of the temple, of which no traces are to be found in the sacred writings. The institution of these additional ceremonies was manifestly owing to those changes and revolutions, which rendered the Jews more conversant with the nations round about them, than they had formerly been. For when they saw the sacred rites of the Greeks and Romans, they were taken with several of the ceremonies that were used in the worship of the heathen deities, and did not hesitate to adopt them in the service of the true God, and add them as an ornament to the rites which they had received by divine appointment.'

The Cabbala, a source of many errors among the Jews.

The external worship of God corrupted also by vain rites and human inventions.

* Matt x. 6. xv. 24, 25. Jo. ix. 39.

† See Joh. Chr. Wolf. *Biblioth. Hebraica*, vol. ii. lib. vii. cap. 1. § ix. p. 206.

‡ See the learned work of Spencer, *De legibus Hebræorum*. in the 4th book of

xv. But whence such enormous degrees of corruption in that very nation which God had, in a peculiar manner, separated from an idolatrous world to be the depository of divine truth? Various causes may be assigned, in order to give a satisfactory account of this matter. First, it is certain, that the ancestors of those Jews, who lived in the time of our Saviour, had brought from Chaldea, and the neighbouring countries, many extravagant and idle fancies, which were utterly unknown to the original founders of the nation.^a The conquest of Asia, by Alexander the Great, was also an event from which we may date a new accession of errors to the Jewish system; since, in consequence of that revolution, the manners and opinions of the Greeks began to spread themselves among the Persians, Syrians, Arabians, and likewise among the Jews, who, before that period, were entirely unacquainted with letters and philosophy. We may further rank among the causes that contributed to corrupt the religion and manners of the Jews, their voyages into the adjacent countries, especially Egypt and Phœnicia, in pursuit of wealth. For with the treasures of these corrupt and superstitious nations, they brought home also their pernicious errors, and their idle fictions, which were imperceptibly blended with their religious system. Nor ought we to omit, in this enumeration, the pestilential influence of the wicked reigns of Herod and his sons, and the enormous instances of idolatry, error, and licentiousness, which this unhappy people had constantly before their eyes in the religion and manners of the Roman governors and soldiers, which no doubt contributed much to the progress of their national superstition and corruption of manners. We might add here many more facts and circumstances, to illustrate further the matter under consideration; but these will be readily suggested to such as have the least acquaintance with the Jewish history from the time of the Maccabees.

The causes of the corruption in doctrine and morals that reigned among the Jews.

xiv. It is indeed worthy of observation, that corrupted as the Jews were with the errors and superstitions of the neighbouring nations, they still preserved a zealous attachment to the law of Moses, and were extremely careful that it should not suffer any di-

Amidst this general corruption, some remains of piety were to be found.

which he treats expressly of those Hebrew rites which were borrowed from the Gentile worship, vol. ii. p. 1086, edition of Cambridge.

^a See Gale's observations on Jamblichus, *De Mysteriis Egyptiorum*, p. 206. Josephus acknowledges the same thing in his *Jewish Antiquities*, book iii. chap. vii. § 2.

minution of its credit or lose any the least degree of that veneration, that was due to its divine authority. Hence *synagogues* were erected throughout the province of Judea, in which the people assembled for the purposes of divine worship, and to hear their doctors interpret and explain the holy Scriptures. There were, beside, in the more populous towns, public schools, in which learned men were appointed to instruct the youth in the knowledge of divine things, and also in other branches of science.* And it is beyond all doubt, that these institutions contributed to maintain the law in its primitive authority, and to stem the torrent of abounding iniquity.

xvii. The Samaritans, who celebrated divine worship in the temple that was built on mount Gerizim, lay under the burden of the same evils that oppressed the Jews, with whom they lived in the bitterest enmity, and were also, like them, highly instrumental in increasing their own calamities. We learn from the most authentic histories of those times, that the Samaritans suffered as much as the Jews, from troubles and divisions fomented by the intrigues of factious spirits, though their religious sects were yet less numerous than those of the latter. Their religion, also, was much more corrupted than that of the Jews, as Christ himself declares in his conversation with the woman of Samaria; though it appears, at the same time, that their notions concerning the offices and ministry of the Messiah, were much more just and conformable to truth, than those which were entertained at Jerusalem.† Upon the whole it is certain, that the Samaritans mixed the profane errors of the Gentiles, with the sacred doctrines of the Jews, and were excessively corrupted by the idolatrous customs of the pagan nations.‡

* See Camp. Vitringa, *De synagoga vetere*, lib. iii. cap. v. p. 667, and lib. i. cap. v. p. 133, vii. p. 156.

† Christ insinuates on the contrary, in the strongest manner, the superiority of the Jewish worship to that of the Samaritans, John iv. 22. See also, on this head, 2 Kings xvii. 29. The passage to which Dr. Mosheim refers, as a proof that the Samaritans had juster notions of the Messiah than the Jews, is the 25th verse of the chapter of St. John already cited, where the woman of Samaria says to Jesus, *I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ; when he is come, he will tell us all things.* But this passage seems much too vague to justify the conclusion of our learned historian. Beside the confession of one person, who may possibly have had some singular and extraordinary advantages, is not a proof, that the nation in general entertained the same sentiments, especially since we know that the Samaritans had corrupted the service of God by a profane mixture of the grossest idolatries.

‡ Those who desire an exact account of the principal authors that have written concerning the Samaritans, will find it in the learned work of Jo. Gottlob Carpzovius, entitled, *Critica, S. Vet. Testam.* part ii. cap. iv. p. 595.

XVIII. The Jews multiplied so prodigiously, that the narrow bounds of Palestine were no longer sufficient to contain them. They poured, therefore, The state of the Jews out of Palestine. their increasing numbers into the neighbouring countries, and that with such rapidity, that at the time of Christ's birth, there was scarcely a province in the empire, where they were not found carrying on commerce, and exercising other lucrative arts. They were maintained in foreign countries against injurious treatment and violence, by the special edicts and protection of the magistrates;² and this, indeed, was absolutely necessary, since in most places, the remarkable difference of their religion and manners, from those of the other nations, exposed them to the hatred and indignation of the ignorant and bigoted multitude. All this appears to have been most singularly and wisely directed by the adorable hand of an interposing Providence, to the end that this people, which was the sole depository of the true religion, and of the knowledge of one Supreme God, being spread abroad through the whole earth, might be every where, by their example, a reproach to superstition, contribute in some measure to check it, and thus prepare the way for that yet fuller discovery of divine truth, which was to shine upon the world from the ministry and gospel of the Son of God.

CHAPTER III.

CONCERNING THE LIFE AND ACTIONS OF JESUS CHRIST.

I. THE errors and disorders that we have now been considering, required something far above human wisdom and power to dispel and remove them, The birth of Jesus Christ. and to deliver mankind from the miserable state to which they were reduced by them. Therefore toward the conclusion of the reign of Herod the Great, the Son of God descended upon earth, and, taking upon him the human nature, appeared to men under the sublime characters of an infallible teacher, an all sufficient mediator, and a spiritual and immortal king. The place of his birth was Bethlehem, in the land of Palestine. The year in which it happened, has not hitherto been fixed with certainty, not

² See the account published at Leyden, 1712. by James Gronovius, of the Roman and Asiatic edicts in favour of the Jews, allowing them the free and secure exercise of their religion, throughout all the cities of the Lesser Asia.

withstanding the deep and laborious researches of the learned on that matter. 'There is nothing surprising in this, when we consider that the first Christians laboured under the same difficulties, and were divided in their opinions, concerning the time of Christ's birth.^a That which appears most probable, is, that it happened about a year and six months before the death of Herod, in the year of Rome 748 or 749.^b The uncertainty, however, of this point is of no sort of consequence. We know that the Sun of Righteousness has shone upon the world. And, though we cannot fix the precise period in which he arose, this will not hinder us from enjoying the direction and influence of his vital and salutary beams.

II. Four inspired writers, who have transmitted to us an account of the life and actions of Jesus Christ, mention particularly his birth, his lineage, his family, and his parents; but they say very little concerning his infancy and his earlier youth.

Not long after his birth, he was conducted by his parents into Egypt, that he might be there out of the reach of Herod's cruelty.^c When he was but twelve years old, he disputed, in the temple, with the most learned of the Jewish doctors, concerning the sublime truths of religion. And the rest of his life, until the thirtieth year of his age, was spent in the obscurity of a private condition, and consecrated to the duties of filial obedience.^d This is all that the wisdom of God has permitted us to know, with certainty, of Christ, before he entered upon his public ministry; nor is the story of his having followed the trade of his adopted father Joseph built upon any sure foundation. There have been, indeed, several writers, who either through the levity of a wanton imagination, or with a design to attract the admiration of the multitude, have invented a series of the most extravagant and ridiculous fables, in order to give an account of this obscure part of the Saviour's life.^e

III. Jesus began his public ministry in the thirtieth year of his age; and to render it more solemn and affecting to the Jews, a man, whose name was John, the son of a Jewish priest, a person of

John, the forerunner of the Messiah.

^a The learned John Albert Fabricius has collected all the opinions of the learned, concerning the year of Christ's birth, in his *Bibliograph. Antiquar.* cap. vii. § 1. p. 187.

^b Matt. iii. 2, &c. John i. 22, &c.

^c Matt. ii. 13.

^d Luke ii. 51, 52.

^e See the account, which the above mentioned Albert Fabricius has given of these romantic triflers, in his *Codex Apocryphus*, N. T. tom. i.

great gravity also, and much respected on account of the austere dignity of his life and manners, was commanded by God to proclaim to the people the coming of the Messiah, that had been promised to their fathers. This extraordinary man called himself the forerunner of the Messiah. Filled with a holy zeal and a divine fervour, he cried aloud to the Jewish nation to depart from their transgressions, and to purify their hearts, that they might thus partake of the blessings, which the Son of God was now come to offer to the world. The exhortations of this respectable messenger were not without effect; and those who, moved by his solemn admonitions, had formed the resolution of correcting their evil dispositions and amending their lives, were initiated into the kingdom of the Redeemer by the ceremony of immersion or baptism.^f Christ himself, before he began his ministry, desired to be solemnly baptized by John, in the waters of Jordan, that he might not, in any point, neglect to answer the demands of the Jewish law.

iv. It is not necessary to enter here into a particular detail of the life and actions of Jesus Christ. All Christians must be perfectly well acquainted with ^{The life of Christ.} them. They must know, that, during the space of three years, and amid the deepest trials of affliction and distress, he instructed the Jewish nation in the will and counsels of the Most High, and omitted nothing, in the course of his ministry, that could contribute either to gain the multitude, or to charm the wise. Every one knows, that his life was a continued scene of the most perfect sanctity, and the purest and most active virtue; not only without spot, but also beyond the reach of suspicion. And it is also well known, that by miracles of the most stupendous kind, and not more stupendous than salutary and beneficent, he displayed to the universe the truth of that religion which he brought with him from above, and demonstrated the reality of his divine commission in the most illustrious manner.

v. As this divine religion was to be propagated to the utmost ends of the earth, it was necessary that Christ should choose a certain number of persons, ^{The election of the apostles, and of the lxx disciples.} to accompany him constantly through the whole course of his ministry; that thus they might be faithful and respectable witnesses of the sanctity of his life, and the

grandeur of his miracles, to the remotest nations; and also transmit to the latest posterity a genuine account of his sublime doctrines, and of the nature and end of the gospel dispensation. Therefore Jesus chose, out of the multitude that attended his discourses, twelve persons, whom he separated from the rest by the name of Apostles. These men were illiterate, poor, and of mean extraction, and such alone were truly proper to answer the views of the divine Saviour. He avoided making use of the ministry of persons endowed with the advantages of fortune and birth, or enriched with the treasures of eloquence and learning, lest the fruits of this embassy, and the progress of the Gospel, should be attributed to human and natural causes.^g These apostles were sent but once to preach to the Jews during the life of Christ.^h He chose to keep them about his own person, that they might be thoroughly instructed in the affairs of his kingdom. That the multitude, however, might not be destitute of teachers to enlighten them with the knowledge of the truth, Christ appointed LXX disciples to preach the glad tidings of life eternal throughout the whole province of Judea.ⁱ

VI. The researches of the learned have been employed to find out the reason of Christ's fixing the number of the apostles to *twelve*, and that of the disciples to *seventy*; and various conjectures have been applied to the solution of this question. But since it is manifest, from the words of our Saviour himself,^k that he intended the number of the xii apostles as an allusion to that of the tribes of Israel; it can scarcely be doubted, that he was willing to insinuate by this appointment, that he was the supreme lord and high-priest of these twelve tribes, into which the Jewish nation was divided. And as the number of disciples answers evidently to that of senators, of whom the counsel of the people, or the sanhedrim, was composed, there is a high degree of probability in the conjecture of those, who think that Christ, by the choice of the *seventy*, designed to admonish the Jews that the authority of their sanhedrim was now at an end, and that all power, with respect to religious matters, was vested in him alone.

VII. The ministry of the divine Saviour was confined

^g 1 Cor. i. 21.

ⁱ Luke x. i.

^h Matt. x. 7.

^k Matt. xix. 26. Luke xxii. 39.

to the Jews; nor while he remained upon earth did he permit his apostles or disciples to extend their labours beyond this distinguished nation.¹

Christ's fame extends beyond Judea.

At the same time if we consider the illustrious acts of mercy and omnipotence, that were performed by Christ, it will be natural to conclude, that his fame must have been very soon spread abroad in other countries. We learn from writers of no small note, that Abgarus king of Edessa, being seized with a severe and dangerous illness, wrote to our blessed Lord to implore his assistance; and that Jesus not only sent him a gracious answer, but also accompanied it with his picture, as a mark of his esteem for that pious prince.^m These letters are still extant. But they are justly looked upon as fictitious by most writers, who also go yet farther, and treat the whole story of Abgarus as entirely fabulous, and unworthy of credit.ⁿ I will not pretend to assert the genuineness of these letters; but I see no reason of sufficient weight to destroy the credibility of the whole story which is supposed to have given occasion to them.^o

VIII. A great number of the Jews, struck with those illustrious marks of a divine authority and power, that shone forth in the ministry and actions of Christ, regarded him as the Son of God, the true Messiah. The rulers of the people, and more especially the chief priests and Pharisees, whose licentiousness and

The success of Christ's ministry.

¹ Matt. x. 5, 6. xv. 24.

^m Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* lib. i. cap. xiii. p. 21. Jo. Albert Fabric. *Codex Apocryphus*, N. T. tom. i. p. 317.

ⁿ See Basnage, *Histoire des Juifs*, vol. i. cap. xviii. p. 500. As also Theoph. Sigf. Bayerus, *Historia Edessena et Osroena*, lib. iii. p. 104. Jos. Simon Assemanus, *Biblioth. Oriental. Clement Vaticanæ*, tom. i. p. 554.

^o There is no author who has discussed this question, concerning the authenticity of the letters of Christ and Abgarus, and the truth of the whole story, with such learning and judgment, as the late Mr. Jones, in the second volume of his excellent work, entitled, *A new and full method of settling the canonical authority of the New Testament*. Notwithstanding the opinions of such celebrated names as Parker, Cave, and Grabe, in favour of these letters, and the history to which they relate, Mr. Jones has offered reasons to prove the whole fictitious, which seem unanswerable, independent of the authorities of Rivet, Chemnitius, Walther, Simon, Du Pin, Wake, Spanheim, Fabricius, and Le Clerc, which he opposes to the three above mentioned. It is remarkable that this story is not mentioned by any writer before Eusebius; that it is but little taken notice of by succeeding writers; that the whole affair was unknown to Christ's apostles, and to the Christians, their contemporaries, as is manifest from the early disputes about the method of receiving Gentile converts into the church, which this story, had it been true, must have entirely decided. As to the letters, no doubt can be made of their spuriousness; since, if Christ had written a letter to Abgarus, it would have been a part of sacred Scripture, and would have been placed at the head of all the books of the New Testament. See Lardner's *Collection of Ancient Jewish and Heathen Testimonies*, vol. i. p. 297, &c. It must be observed in behalf of Eusebius, that he relates this story, as drawn from the archives of Edessa.

hypocrisy he censured with a noble and generous freedom, laboured with success, by the help of their passions, to extinguish in their breasts the conviction of his celestial mission; or, at least, to suppress the effects it was adapted to produce upon their conduct. Fearing also lest the ministry of Christ should tend to diminish their credit, and to deprive them of the advantages they derived from the impious abuse of their authority in religious matters; they laid snares for his life, which for a considerable time were without effect. They succeeded at length by the infernal treason of an apostate disciple, by the treachery of Judas, who discovered the retreat which his divine master had chosen for the purposes of meditation and repose, and thus delivered him into the merciless hands of a brutal soldiery.

IX. In consequence of this, Jesus was first brought before the Jewish high-priest and sanhedrim, before whom he was accused of having violated the law, and blasphemed the majesty of God. Dragged from thence to the tribunal of Pilate the Roman prætor, he was there charged with seditious enterprises, and with treason against Cæsar. Both these accusations were so evidently false and destitute even of every appearance of truth, that they must have been rejected by any judge, who acted upon the principles of common equity. But the clamours of an enraged populace, set on by the impious instigations of their priests and rulers, intimidated Pilate, and engaged him, though with the utmost reluctance, and in opposition to the dictates of his conscience, to pronounce a capital sentence against Christ. The divine Saviour behaved with inexpressible dignity under this heavy trial. As the end of his mission was to make expiation for the sins of men, so when all things were ready, and when he had finished the work of his glorious ministry, he placidly submitted to the death of the cross, and with a serene and voluntary resignation, committed his spirit into the hands of the Father.

X. After Jesus had remained three days in the sepulchre, he resumed that life which he had voluntarily laid down; and rising from the dead, declared to the universe, by that triumphant act, that the divine justice was satisfied, and the paths of salvation and immortality rendered accessible to the human race. He conversed with his disciples during forty days after his resur-

Death of
Christ.

His resurrec-
tion.

rection, and employed that time in instructing them more fully concerning the nature of his kingdom. Many wise and important reasons prevented his showing himself publicly at Jerusalem, to confound the malignity and unbelief of his enemies. He contented himself with manifesting the certainty of his glorious resurrection, to a sufficient number of faithful and credible witnesses; foreseeing, perhaps, that if he appeared in public, those malicious unbelievers who had formerly attributed his miracles to the power of magic, would now represent his resurrection, as a phantom or vision, produced by the influence of infernal powers. After having remained upon earth during the space of time above mentioned, and given to his disciples a divine commission to preach the glad tidings of salvation and immortality to the human race, he ascended into heaven, in their presence, and resumed the enjoyment of that glory of which he was possessed before the worlds were created.

CHAPTER IV.

CONCERNING THE PROSPEROUS EVENTS THAT HAPPENED TO THE CHURCH DURING THIS CENTURY.

I. JESUS being ascended into heaven, soon showed his afflicted disciples, that, though invisible to mortal eyes, he was still their omnipotent protector, and their benevolent guide. About fifty days after his departure from them, he gave them the first proof of that majesty and power to which he was exalted, by the effusion of the Holy Ghost upon them according to his promise.^p The consequences of this grand event were surprising and glorious, infinitely honourable to the Christian religion and the divine mission of its triumphant author. For no sooner had the apostles received this precious gift, this celestial guide, than their ignorance was turned into light, their doubts into certainty, their fears into a firm and invincible fortitude, and their former backwardness into an ardent and inextinguishable zeal, which led them to undertake their sacred office with the utmost intrepidity and alacrity of mind. This marvellous event was attended with a variety of gifts; particularly the gift of tongues, so indispensably necessary to qualify the apos-

The apostles
filled with the
Holy Ghost

tles to preach the gospel to the different nations. These holy apostles were also filled with a perfect persuasion, founded on Christ's express promise, that the divine presence would perpetually accompany them, and show itself by miraculous interpositions, as often as the success of their ministry should render this necessary.

II. Relying upon these celestial succours, the apostles began their glorious ministry, by preaching the gospel, according to Christ's positive command, first to the Jews, and by endeavouring to bring that deluded people to the knowledge of the truth.^q Nor were their labours unsuccessful, since in a very short time, many thousands were converted by the influence of their ministry, to the Christian faith.^r From the Jews, they passed to the Samaritans, to whom they preached with such efficacy, that great numbers of that nation acknowledged the Messiah.^s And after that they had exercised their ministry, during several years, at Jerusalem, and brought to a sufficient degree of consistence and maturity the Christian churches which were founded in Palestine and the adjacent countries, they extended their views further, carried the divine lamp of the gospel to all the nations of the world, and saw their labours crowned almost every where with the most abundant fruits.

III. No sooner was Christ exalted on high, than the apostles determined to render their number complete, as it had been fixed by their divine master, and accordingly to choose, in the place of Judas, who had desperately perished by his own hands, a man endowed with such degrees of sanctity and wisdom as were necessary in a station of such vast importance. Having therefore gathered together the small assembly of Christians which had then been formed at Jerusalem, two men remarkable for their piety and faith, were proposed as the most worthy to stand candidates for this sacred office. These men were Matthias and Barnabas, the former of whom was, either by lot, which is the most general opinion, or by a plurality of voices of the assembly there present, chosen to the dignity of an apostle.^t

IV. All these apostles were men without education, and absolutely ignorant of letters and philosophy; and yet in the infancy of the Christian church, it was

Preach the
gospel first to
the Jews and
Samaritans.

The election
of a new apos-
tle.

Paul called to
be an apostle.

^q Luke xxiv. 47. Acts i. 8. xiii. 46.

^r Acts ii. 41. iv. 4.

^s Acts i. 8. viii. 14.

^t Acts i. 26.

necessary that there should be, at least, some one defender of the gospel, who, versed in the learned arts, might be able to combat the Jewish doctors and the pagan philosophers with their own arms. For this purpose, Jesus himself, by an extraordinary voice from heaven, called to his service a thirteenth apostle, whose name was Saul, afterward Paul, and whose acquaintance both with Jewish and Grecian learning was very considerable.^u This extraordinary man, who had been one of the most virulent enemies of the Christians, became their most glorious and triumphant defender. Independent of the miraculous gifts with which he was enriched, he was naturally possessed of an invincible courage, an amazing force of genius, and a spirit of patience, which no fatigue could overcome, and which no sufferings or trials could exhaust. To these the cause of the gospel, under the divine appointment, owed a considerable part of its rapid progress and surprising success, as the *Acts of the Apostles*, and the *Epistles of St. Paul*, abundantly testify.

v. The first Christian church, founded by the apostles, was that of Jerusalem, which was the model of ^{The church of Jerusalem.} all those that were afterward erected during this first century. This church was, however, governed by the apostles themselves, to whom both the *elders*, and those who were intrusted with the care of the poor, ^{How constituted.} even the *deacons*, were subject. The people, though they had not abandoned the Jewish worship, held, however, separate assemblies, in which they were instructed by the apostles and elders, prayed together, celebrated the holy supper in remembrance of Christ, of his death and sufferings, and the salvation offered to mankind through him; and, at the conclusion of these meetings, they testified their mutual love, partly by their liberality to the poor, and partly by sober and friendly repasts,^w which from thence were called *feasts of charity*. Among the virtues which distinguished the rising church in this its infancy, that of charity to the poor and needy shone in the first rank, and with the brightest lustre. The rich supplied the wants of their indigent brethren with such liberality and readiness, that, as St. Luke tells us, among the primitive disciples of Christ, all things were *in common*.^x This expression has, however, been greatly abused, and has been made to signify a *community of rights, goods, or possessions*, than

^u Acts ix. 1.^w Acts ii. 42.^x Acts ii. 44. iv. 32.

which interpretation nothing is more groundless, nothing more false. For from a multitude of reasons, as well as from the express words of St. Peter,^y it is abundantly manifest that the community, which is implied in mutual *use* and mutual liberality, is the only thing intended in this passage.^z

VI. The apostles, having finished their work at Jerusalem, went from thence to employ their labours in other nations, travelled, with this view, over a great part of the known world, and in a short time planted a vast number of churches among the Gentiles. Several of these are mentioned in the sacred writings, particularly in the *Acts of the Apostles*;^a though these are, undoubtedly, but a small part of the churches, which were founded either by the apostles themselves, or by their disciples under their immediate direction. The distance of time, and the want of records, leave us at a loss with respect to many interesting circumstances of the peregrinations of the apostles; nor have we any certain or precise accounts of the limits of their voyages, of the particular countries where they sojourned, nor of the times and places in which they finished their glorious course. The stories that are told concerning their arrival and exploits among the Gauls, the English, the Spaniards, the Germans, the Americans, the Chinese, the Indians, and the Russians, are too romantic in their nature, and of too recent a date, to be received by an impartial inquirer after truth. The greatest part of these fables were forged after the time of Charlemagne, when most of the Christian churches contended about the antiquity of their origin, with as much vehemence as the Arcadians, Egyptians, and Greeks disputed formerly about their seniority and precedence.

VII. At the same time, the beauty and excellence of the Christian religion excited the admiration of the thinking part of mankind, wherever the apostles directed their course. Many, who were not wil-

Many churches founded by the apostles in different places.

Christ respected among the Gentiles.

^y Acts v. 4.

¶ ^z This is proved with the utmost evidence by Dr. Mosheim, in a dissertation concerning the true nature of that community of goods, which is said to have taken place in the church of Jerusalem. This learned discourse is to be found in the second volume of our author's incomparable work, entitled, *Dissertationes ad Historiam Ecclesiasticam pertinentes*.

^a The names of the churches, planted by the apostles in the different nations, are specified in a work of Phil. James Hartman, *De rebus gestis Christianorum sub apostolis*, cap. vii. p. 107; and also in that of F. Albert Fabricius, entitled, *Lux Evangelis toti orbi exoriens*, cap. v. p. 23, &c.

ling to adopt the whole of its doctrines, were nevertheless, as appears from undoubted records, so struck with the account of Christ's life and actions, and so charmed with the sublime purity of his precepts, that they ranked him in the number of the greatest heroes, nay, even of the gods themselves. Great numbers kept, with the utmost care, in their houses, pictures or images of the divine Saviour and his apostles, which they treated with the highest marks of veneration and respect.^b And so illustrious was the fame of Christ's power grown, after his resurrection from the dead, and the miraculous gifts shed from on high upon his apostles, that the emperor Tiberius is said to have proposed his being enrolled among the gods of Rome, which the opposition of the senate hindered from taking effect. Many have doubted of the truth of this story; there are, however, several authors of the first note who have declared, that the reasons alleged for the truth of this fact are such as have removed their doubts, and appeared to them satisfactory and conclusive.^c

VIII. When we consider the rapid progress of Christianity among the Gentile nations, and the poor and feeble instruments by which this great and amazing event was immediately effected, we must naturally have recourse to an omnipotent and invisible hand, as its true and proper cause. For unless we suppose here a divine interposition, how was it possible that men, destitute of all human aid, without credit or riches, learning or eloquence, could, in so short a time, persuade a considerable part of mankind to abandon the religion of their

The causes of the rapid propagation of the gospel.

^b This is particularly mentioned by Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* lib. vii. cap. xviii. p. 265, and by Irenæus, lib. i. c. xxv.

^c See Theod. Hassæus, *De decreto Tiberii, quo Christum referre voluit in numerum Deorum*; as also a very learned letter, written in defence of the truth of this fact, by the celebrated Christopher Iselius, and published in the *Bibliothèque Germanique*, tom. xxxii. p. 147, and tom. xxxiii. p. 12. [We may add to this note of Dr Mosheim, that the late learned professor Altmann published at Bern, in the year 1755, an ingenious pamphlet upon this subject, entitled, *Disquisitio Historico-critica de Epistola Pontii Pilati ad Tiberium, qua Christi miracula, mors, et resurrectio recensentur*. This author makes it appear, that though the letter, which some have attributed to Pilate, and which is extant in several authors, be manifestly spurious, yet it is no less certain that Pilate sent to Tiberius an account of the death and resurrection of Christ. See the *Biblioth. des sciences, et des beaux arts*, published at the Hague, tom. vi. p. 360. This matter has been examined anew with his usual diligence and accuracy, by the learned Dr. Lardner, in the third volume of his *Collection of Jewish and Heathen Testimonies to the truth of the Christian Religion*, &c. p. 310, &c. He thinks that the testimonies of Justin Martyr and Tertullian, who, in apologies for Christianity, that were presented, or at least addressed to the emperor and senate of Rome, or to magistrates of high authority in the empire, affirm, that Pilate sent to Tiberius an account of the death and resurrection of Christ, deserve some regard; though some writers, and particularly Orosius, have made alterations and additions in the original narration of Tertullian, that are too much adapted to diminish the credibility of the whole.

ancestors? How was it possible that an handful of apostles, who, as fishermen and publicans, must have been contemned by their own nation, and as Jews, must have been odious to all others, could engage the learned and the mighty, as well as the simple and those of low degree, to forsake their favourite prejudices, and to embrace a new religion which was an enemy to their corrupt passions? and, indeed, there were undoubted marks of a celestial power perpetually attending their ministry. There was, in their very language, an incredible energy, an amazing power of sending light into the understanding, and conviction into the heart. To this were added, the commanding influence of stupendous miracles, the foretelling of future events, the power of discerning the secret thoughts and intentions of the heart, a magnanimity superior to all difficulties, a contempt of riches and honours, a serene tranquillity in the face of death, and an invincible patience under torments still more dreadful than death itself; and all this accompanied with lives free from all stain, and adorned with the constant practice of sublime virtue. Thus were the messengers of the divine Saviour, the heralds of his spiritual and immortal kingdom, furnished for their glorious work, as the unanimous voice of ancient history so loudly testifies. The event sufficiently declares this; for without these remarkable and extraordinary circumstances, no rational account can be given of the rapid propagation of the gospel throughout the world.

ix. What indeed contributed still further to this glorious event, was, the power vested in the apostles of transmitting to their disciples these miraculous gifts. For many of the first Christians were no sooner baptized according to Christ's appointment, and dedicated to the service of God by solemn prayer and the imposition of hands, than they spoke languages they had never known or learned before; foretold future events, healed the sick by pronouncing the name of Jesus, restored the dead to life, and performed many things above the reach of human power.^d And it is no wonder if men, who had the power of communicating to others these marvellous gifts, appeared great and respectable wherever they exercised their glorious ministry.

Miraculous
gifts commu-
nicated by
the apostles.

^d See Pfanner's learned treatise, *De charismatibus sive donis miraculosis antiquæ ecclesiæ*, published at Frankfort, 1683.

x. Such then were the true causes of that amazing rapidity with which the Christian religion spread itself upon earth; and those who pretend to assign other reasons of this surprising event, indulge themselves in idle fictions, which must disgust every attentive observer of men and things. In vain, therefore, have some imagined, that the extraordinary liberality of the Christians to their poor, was a temptation to the more indolent and corrupt part of the multitude to embrace the gospel. Such malignant and superficial reasoners do not consider, that those who embraced this divine religion exposed their lives to the most imminent danger; nor have they attention enough to recollect, that neither lazy nor vicious members were suffered to remain in the society of Christians. Equally vain is the invention of those, who imagine that the profligate lives of the heathen priests was an occasion of the conversion of many to Christianity. For, though this might indeed give them a disgust at the religion of these unworthy ministers, yet it could not, alone, attach them to that of Jesus, which offered them from the world no other prospects, than those of poverty, infamy, and death. The person, who could embrace the gospel solely from the motive now mentioned, must have reasoned in this senseless and extravagant manner; “the ministers of that religion which I have professed from my infancy, lead profligate lives; therefore, I will become a Christian, join myself to that body of men who are condemned by the laws of the state, and thus expose my life and fortune to the most imminent danger.”

The progress
of the gospel
attributed to
absurd causes.

CHAPTER V.

CONCERNING THE CALAMITOUS EVENTS THAT HAPPENED TO THE CHURCH.

I. THE innocence and virtue that distinguished so eminently the lives of Christ's servants, and the spotless purity of the doctrine they taught, were not sufficient to defend them against the virulence and malignity of the Jews. The priests and rulers of that abandoned people, not only loaded with injuries and reproach the apostles of Jesus, and their disciples, but condemned as many of them as they could, to death, and executed in the most irregular and barbarous manner their sanguinary decrees. The murder of Stephen, of James

The Jews per-
secute the
Christians in
Palestine.

the son of Zebedee, and of James, surnamed the Just, bishop of Jerusalem, furnish dreadful examples of the truth of what we here advance.* This odious malignity of the Jewish doctors, against the heralds of the gospel, was undoubtedly owing to a secret apprehension, that the progress of Christianity would destroy the credit of Judaism, and bring on the ruin of their pompous ceremonies.

II. The Jews who lived out of Palestine, in the Roman provinces, did not yield to those of Jerusalem in point of cruelty to the innocent disciples of Christ.

And also by those in foreign countries.

We learn from the history of the *Acts of the Apostles*, and other records of unquestionable authority, that they spared no labour, but zealously seized every occasion of animating the magistrates against the Christians, and setting on the multitude to demand their destruction. The high-priest of the nation, and the Jews, who dwelt in Palestine, were instrumental in exciting the rage of these foreign Jews against the infant church, by sending messengers to exhort them not only to avoid all intercourse with the Christians, but also to persecute them in the most vehement manner.† For this inhuman order, they endeavoured to find out the most plausible pretexts; and, therefore, they gave out, that the Christians were enemies to the Roman emperor, since they acknowledged the authority of a certain person whose name was Jesus, whom Pilate had punished capitally as a malefactor by a most righteous sentence, and on whom, nevertheless, they conferred the royal dignity. These perfidious insinuations had the intended effect, and the rage of the Jews against the Christians was conveyed from father to son, from age to age; so that the church of Christ had, in no period of time, more bitter and desperate enemies than that very people, to whom the immortal Saviour was more especially sent.

III. The Supreme Judge of the world did not let the barbarous conduct of this perfidious nation go unpunished. The most signal marks of divine justice pursued them, and the cruelties they had exercised upon Christ and his disciples, were dreadfully avenged. The God, who had for so many ages pro-

The Jews severely punished for their treatment of Christ and his disciples.

* The martyrdom of Stephen is recorded in the *Acts of the Apostles*, vii. 55; and that of James the son of Zebedee, Acts xii. 1, 2; that of James the Just, bishop of Jerusalem, is mentioned by Josephus, in his *Jewish Antiquities*, book xx. chap. viii. and by Eusebius, in his *Eccles. History*, book ii. chap. xxiii.

† See the Dialogue of Justin Martyr with Trypho the Jew, p. 51. 52, 53, 109.

ted the Jews with an outstretched arm, withdrew his aid. He permitted Jerusalem, with its famous temple, to be destroyed by Vespasian and his son Titus, an innumerable multitude of this devoted people to perish by the sword, and the greatest part of those that remained to groan under the yoke of a severe bondage. Nothing can be more affecting than the account of this terrible event, and the circumstantial description of the tremendous calamities which attended it, as they are given by Josephus, himself a Jew, and also a spectator of this horrid scene. From this period the Jews experienced, in every place, the hatred and contempt of the Gentile nations, still more than they had formerly done. And in these their calamities the predictions of Christ were amply fulfilled, and his divine mission further illustrated.

iv. However virulent the Jews were against the Christians, yet, upon many occasions, they wanted power to execute their cruel purposes. This was not the case with the heathen nations; and therefore from them the Christians suffered the severest calamities. The Romans are said to have pursued the Christians with the utmost violence in ten persecutions,^g but this number is not verified by the ancient history of the Church. For if, by these persecutions, such only are meant as were singularly severe and universal throughout the empire, then it is certain, that these amount not to the number above-mentioned. And, if we take the provincial and less remarkable persecutions into the account, they far exceed it. In the fifth century, certain Christians were led by some passages of the holy Scriptures, and by one especially in the *Revelations*,^h to imagine that the church was to suffer ten calamities of a most grievous nature. To this notion, therefore, they endeavoured, though not all in the same way, to accommodate the language of history, even against the testimony of those ancient records, from whence alone history can speak with authority.ⁱ

The ten Gentile persecutions.

v. Nero was the first emperor who enacted laws against the Christians. In this he was followed by Domitian, Marcus Antoninus the philosopher, Severus, and the other emperors who indulged the preju-

Laws made against the Christians.

^g The learned J. Albert Fabricius has given us a list of the authors that have written concerning these persecutions, in his *Lux Evangelii orbi universo exorients*, cap. vii. p. 133.

^h Revel. xvii. 14.

ⁱ See Sulpitius Severus, book ii. chap. xxxiii. As also Austin, *De civitate Dei*, book xviii. chap. lii.

dices they had imbibed against the disciples of Jesus. All the edicts of these different princes were not, however, equally unjust, nor made with the same views, and for the same reasons. Were they now extant, as they were collected by the celebrated lawyer Domitius, in his book concerning the *duty of a proconsul*, they would undoubtedly cast a great light upon the history of the church, under the persecuting emperors.^k At present we must, in many cases, be satisfied with probable conjectures for want of more certain evidence.

VI. Before we proceed further in this part of our history, a very natural curiosity calls us to inquire how it happened that the Romans, who were troublesome to no nation on account of their religion, and who suffered even the Jews to live under their own laws, and follow their own method of worship, treated the Christians alone with such severity? This important question seems still more difficult to be solved, when we consider that the excellent nature of the Christian religion, and its admirable tendency to promote both the public welfare of the state, and the private felicity of the individual, entitled it, in a singular manner, to the favour and protection of the reigning powers. One of the principal reasons of the severity with which the Romans persecuted the Christians, notwithstanding these considerations, seems to have been the abhorrence and contempt with which the latter regarded the religion of the empire, which was so intimately connected with the form, and indeed, with the very essence of its political constitution. For though the Romans gave an unlimited toleration to all religions which had nothing in their tenets dangerous to the commonwealth, yet they would not permit that of their ancestors, which was established by the laws of the state, to be turned into derision, nor the people to be drawn away from their attachment to it. These, however, were the two things which the Christians were charged with, and that justly, though to their honour. They dared to ridicule the absurdities of the pagan superstition, and they were ardent and assiduous in gaining proselytes to

The cause of the persecution of the Christians by the Romans.

^k The collection of the imperial edicts against the Christians, made by Domitius, and now lost, is mentioned by Lactantius, in his *Divine institutes*, book v. chap. xi. Such of these edicts, as have escaped the ruins of time, are learnedly illustrated by Franc. Balduinus, in a small treatise, entitled, *Commentarium ad edicta veterum principum Romanorum de Christianis*. Of which a second edition was published by Mr. Gundling, at Halle, 1727.

the truth. Nor did they only attack the religion of Rome, but also all the different shapes and forms under which superstition appeared in the various countries where they exercised their ministry. From hence the Romans concluded, that the Christian sect was not only unsupportably daring and arrogant, but, moreover, an enemy to the public tranquillity, and every way proper to excite civil wars and commotions in the empire. It is, probably, on this account, that Tacitus reproaches them with the odious character of *haters of mankind*,^l and styles the religion of Jesus a *destructive superstition*; and that Suetonius speaks of the Christians, and their doctrine, in terms of the same kind.^m

VII. Another circumstance that irritated the Romans against the Christians, was the simplicity of their worship, which resembled in nothing the sacred rites of any other people. The Christians had neither sacrifices, nor temples, nor images, nor oracles, nor sacerdotal orders; and this was sufficient to bring upon them the reproaches of an ignorant multitude, who imagined that there could be no religion without these. Thus they were looked upon as a sort of atheists; and by the Roman laws, those who were chargeable with atheism were declared the pests of human society. But this was not all; the sordid interests of a multitude of lazy and selfish priests were immediately connected with the ruin and oppression of the Christian cause. The public worship of such an immense number of deities was a source of subsistence, and even of riches, to the whole rabble of priests and augurs, and also to a multitude of merchants and artists. And as the progress of the gospel threatened the ruin of this religious traffic, and the profits it produced, this raised up new enemies to the Christians, and armed the rage of mercenary superstition against their lives and their cause."

Other causes
of these per-
secutions.

^l Annal. lib. xv. cap. xlv.

^m In Nerone, cap. xvi. These odious epithets, which Tacitus gives to the Christians and their religion, as likewise the language of Suetonius, who calls Christianity a *poisonous or malignant superstition*, *malefica superstitio*, are founded upon the same reasons. A sect, which not only could not endure, but even laboured to abolish, the religious systems of the Romans, and also those of all the other nations of the universe, appeared to the short-sighted and superficial observers of religious matters as enemies of mankind, and persons possessed with a mortal hatred of all the human race.

ⁿ This observation is verified by the story of Demetrius the silversmith, Acts xix. 25, and by the following passage in the 97th letter of the xth book of Pliny's epistles; "the temples, which were *almost deserted*, begin to be frequented again; and the sacred rites, which have been long neglected, are again performed. The victims, which have had hitherto *few purchasers*, begin to come again to the market." &c.

VIII. To accomplish more speedily the ruin of the Christians, those, whose interests were incompatible with the progress of the gospel, loaded them with the most odious calumnies, which were too easily received as truth, by the credulous and unthinking multitude, among whom they were dispersed with the utmost industry. We find a large account of these perfidious and ill-grounded reproaches in the writings of the first defenders of the Christian cause.^o And these, indeed, were the only arms they had to oppose the truth; since the excellence of the gospel, and the virtue of its ministers and followers, left its enemies no resources but calumny and persecution. Nothing can be imagined, in point of virulence and fury, that they did not employ for the ruin of the Christians. They even went so far as to persuade the multitude, that all the calamities, wars, tempests, and diseases, that afflicted mankind, were judgments sent down by the angry gods, because the Christians, who contemned their authority, were suffered in the empire.^a

IX. The various kinds of punishments, both capital and corrective, which were employed against the Christians, are particularly described by learned men who have written professedly upon that subject.^a The forms of proceeding, used in their condemnation, may be seen in the *Acts of the Martyrs*, in the letters of Pliny and Trajan, and other ancient monuments. These judicial forms were very different, at different times, and changed naturally according to the mildness or severity of the laws enacted by the different emperors against the Christians. Thus, at one time, we see the most diligent search made after the followers of Christ; at another, all perquisition suspended, and positive accusation and information only allowed. Under one reign we see them upon their being proved Christians, or their confessing themselves such, immediately dragged away to execution, unless they prevent their punishment by apostacy; under another, we see inhuman magistrates endeavouring to compel them, by all sorts of tortures, to renounce their profession.

^o See the laborious work of Christ. Kortholt, entitled, *Paganus obrectator, seu de calumniis Gentilium in Christianos*; to which may be added, Jo. Jac. Huldricus, *De calumniis Gentilium in Christianos*, published at Zurich, in 8vo, in the year 1744.

^p See Arnobius *Contra gentes*.

^q See for this purpose Ant. Gallonius and Gasp. Sagittarius, *De cruciatibus martyrum*.

^r See Bohmer, *Juris Eccles. Protestant.* tom. iv. lib. v. *Decretal.* tit. 1. § 32, p. 617.

x. They, who, in the perilous times of the church, fell by the hand of bloody persecution, and expired in the cause of the divine Saviour, were called Martyrs and confessors. *martyrs*; a term borrowed from the sacred writings, which signifies *witnesses*, and thus expresses the glorious testimony which these magnanimous believers bore to the truth. The title of *confessors* was given to such, as, in the face of death, and at the expense of honours, fortune, and all the other advantages of the world, had confessed with fortitude, before the Roman tribunals, their firm attachment to the religion of Jesus. The veneration that was paid to both *martyrs* and *confessors* is hardly credible. The distinguishing honours and privileges they enjoyed, the authority with which their counsels and decisions were attended, would furnish ample matter for a history apart; and such an undertaking might be highly useful in many respects. There was, no doubt, as much wisdom as justice in treating with such respect, and investing with such privileges, these Christian heroes; since nothing was more adapted to encourage others to suffer with cheerfulness in the cause of Christ. But, as the best and wisest institutions are generally perverted, by the weakness or corruption of men from their original purpose; so the authority and privileges granted, in the beginning, to martyrs and confessors, became, in process of time, a support to superstition, an incentive to enthusiasm, and a source of innumerable evils and abuses.

xi. The first three or four ages of the church were stained with the blood of martyrs, who suffered for the name of Jesus. The greatness of their number is acknowledged by all, who have a competent acquaintance with ancient history, and who have examined that matter with any degree of impartiality. It is true, the learned Dodwell has endeavoured to invalidate this unanimous decision of the ancient historians,^a and to diminish considerably the number of those that suffered death for the gospel. And after him, several writers have maintained his opinion, and asserted, that whatever may have been the calamities that the Christians, in general, suffered for their attachment to the gospel, very few were put to death on that account. This hypothesis has been warmly

^a See Dodwell's dissertation, *De paucitate martyrum*, in his *Dissertationes Cyprianicæ*.

opposed, as derogating from that divine power which enabled Christians to be faithful even unto death, and a contrary one embraced, which augments prodigiously the number of these heroic sufferers. Here, no doubt, it will be wise to avoid both these extremes, and to hold the middle path, which certainly leads nearest to the truth. The martyrs were less in number than several of the ancient and modern writers have supposed them to be ; but much more numerous than Dodwell and his followers are willing to believe. And this medium will be easily admitted by such, as have learned from the ancient writers, that, in the darkest and most calamitous times of the church, all Christians were not equally, nor promiscuously disturbed, nor called before the public tribunals. Those who were of the lowest rank of the people, escaped the best ; their obscurity, in some measure, screened them from the fury of persecution. The learned and eloquent, the doctors and ministers, and chiefly the rich, after the confiscation of whose fortunes a rapacious magistracy were perpetually gaping, these were the persons the most exposed to the dangers of the times.

XII. The actions and sayings of these holy martyrs, Their lives and actions. from the moment of their imprisonment to their last gasp, were carefully recorded, in order to be read on certain days, and thus proposed as models to future ages. But few, however, of these ancient acts are come down to our times ;[†] the greatest part of them having been destroyed during that dreadful persecution which Diocletian carried on ten years, with such fury, against the Christians. For a most diligent search was then made after all their books and papers ; and all of them that were found were committed to the flames. From the eighth century downward, several Greek and Latin writers endeavoured to make up this loss, by compiling, with vast labour, accounts of the lives and actions of the ancient martyrs. But the most of them have given us little else than a series of fables, adorned with profusion of rhetorical flowers, and striking images, as the wiser, even among the Romish doctors, frankly acknowledge. Nor are those records, that pass under the name of *martyrology*, worthy

[†] Such of those acts as are worthy of credit have been collected by the learned Ruinartus, into one volume in folio, of a moderate size, entitled, *Selecta et sincera martyrum acta*, Amstelod. 1713. The hypothesis of Dodwell is amply refuted in a laboured preface which the author has prefixed to this work.

of superior credit, since they bear the most evident marks both of ignorance and falsehood. So that, upon the whole, this part of Ecclesiastical history, for want of ancient and authentic monuments, is extremely imperfect, and necessarily attended with much obscurity.

xiii. It would have been surprising, if, under such a monster of cruelty as Nero, the Christians had enjoyed the sweets of tranquillity and freedom. Their persecution under Nero. But this was far from being the case; for this perfidious tyrant accused them of having set fire to the city of Rome, that horrid crime, which he himself had committed with a barbarous pleasure. In avenging this crime upon the innocent Christians, he ordered matters so, that the punishment should bear some resemblance to the offence. He, therefore, wrapped up some of them in combustible garments, and ordered fire to be set to them when the darkness came on, that thus, like torches, they might dispel the obscurity of the night; while others were fastened to crosses, or torn in pieces by wild beasts, or put to death in some such dreadful manner. This horrid persecution was set on foot in the month of November," in the 64th year of Christ, and in it, according to some ancient accounts, St. Paul and St. Peter suffered martyrdom; though this latter fact is contested by many as being absolutely irreconcilable with chronology." The death of Nero, who perished miserably in the year 68, put an end to the calamities of this first persecution, under which, during the space of four years, the Christians suffered every sort of torment and affliction, which the ingenious cruelty of their enemies could invent.

xiv. Learned men are not entirely agreed concerning the extent of this persecution under Nero. Some confine it to the city of Rome, while others represent it as having raged throughout the whole empire. The extent of this persecution. The latter opinion, which is also the most ancient,*

* See, for a further illustration of this point of chronology, two French dissertations of the very learned Alphonse de Vignoles concerning the cause, and the commencement of the persecution under Nero, which are printed in Masson's *Histoire critique de la republique des lettres*, tom. viii. p. 74—117, tom. ix. p. 172—186. See also Toinard, *Ad Lactantium de mortibus persecutorum*, p. 398.

w See Tillemont, *Histoire des empereurs*, tom. i. p. 564. Baratier, *De successione Romanorum. Pontif. cap. v. p. 60.*

x This opinion was first defended by Franc. Balduin, in his *Comm. ad edicta imperatoris in Christianos*, p. 27, 28. After him Launojus maintained the same opinion in his *Dissert. qua Sulpitii Severi locus de prima martyrum Gallie epocha vindicatur*, § 1, p. 139, 140, tom. ii. part i. opp. This opinion, however, is still more acutely and learnedly defended by Dodwell, in the xith of his *Dissertationes Cyprignicae*.

is undoubtedly to be preferred; as it is certain, that the laws enacted against the Christians, were enacted against the whole body, and not against particular churches, and were consequently in force in the remotest provinces. The authority of Tertullian confirms this, who tells us that Nero and Domitian had enacted laws against the Christians, of which Trajan had, in part, taken away the force, and rendered them, in some measure, without effect.^y We shall not have recourse for a further confirmation of this opinion, to that famous Portuguese or Spanish inscription, in which Nero is praised for having *purged that province from the new superstition*; since that inscription is justly suspected to be a mere forgery, and the best Spanish authors consider it as such.^z But we may, however make one observation, which will tend to illustrate the point in question, and that is, that, since the Christians were condemned by Nero, not so much on account of their religion, as for the falsely imputed crime of burning the city,^a it is scarcely to be imagined, that he would leave unmolested, even beyond the bounds of Rome, a sect whose members were accused of such an abominable deed.

xv. Though, immediately after the death of Nero, the rage of this first persecution against the Christians ceased, yet the flame broke out anew in the year ninety-three or ninety-four, under Domitian a prince little inferior to Nero in all sorts of wickedness.^b This persecution was occasioned, if we may give credit to Hege-sippus, by the fears that Domitian was under of losing the empire;^c for he had been informed, that, among the relations of Christ, a man should arise, who, possessed of a turbulent and ambitious spirit, was to excite commotions in the state, and

<sup>The persecu-
tion under Do-
mitian.</sup>

^y *Apologet.* cap. iv. p. 46, according to the edition of Havercamp.

^z This celebrated inscription is published by the learned Gruterus, in the first volume of his inscriptions, p. cccxxviii. n. 9. It must, however, be observed, that the best Spanish writers dare not venture to defend the genuineness and authority of this inscription, as it has not been seen by any of them, and was first produced by Cyriac of Ancona, a person universally known to be utterly unworthy of the least credit. We shall add here the judgment which the excellent historian of Spain, Jo. de Ferreras, has given of this inscription, in his *Histoire generale d'Espagne*, tom. i. p. 192. "Je ne puis m'empêcher," says he, "d'observer que Cyriac d'Ancone fut le premier qui publia cette inscription, et que c'est de lui que les autres l'ont tirée; mais comme la foi de cet Ecrivain est suspect au jugement de tous les savans, que d'ailleurs il n'y a ni vestige, ni souvenir, de cette inscription dans les places où l'on dit qu'elle'est trouvée, et qu'on nescait où la prendre à present, chacun peut en porter le jugement qu'il voudra."

^a See Theod. Ruinart, *Præf. ad acta martyrum sincera et selecta*, f. 31, &c.

^b *Idem*, *Præf. ad acta martyrum*, &c. f. 33. Thom. Ittigius, *Selectis Histor. Eccl. Capit.* Sæc. i. cap. vi. § 11, p. 331.

^c Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* lib. iii. cap. xix. xx

aim at supreme dominion. However that may have been, the persecution renewed by this unworthy prince was extremely violent, though his untimely death put a stop to it not long after it commenced. Flavius Clemens a man of consular dignity, and Flavia Domitilla his niece, or, as some say, his wife, were the principal martyrs that suffered in this persecution, in which also the apostle John was banished to the isle of Patmos. Tertullian and other writers inform us, that, before his banishment, he was thrown into a chaldron of boiling oil, from whence he came forth, not only living, but even unhurt. This story, however, is not attested in such a manner, as to leave no remaining doubt about its certainty.^d

^d See Mosheim's *Syntagma dissert. ad historiam eccles. pertinentium*, p. 497—546.

PART II.

INTERNAL HISTORY OF THE CHURCH.

CHAPTER I.

CONTAINING AN ACCOUNT OF THE STATE OF LEARNING AND PHILOSOPHY.

1. IF we had any certain or satisfactory account of the doctrines, which were received among the wiser of the eastern nations, when the light of the gospel first rose upon the world, this would contribute to illustrate many important points in the ancient history of the church. But the case is quite otherwise; the fragments of the ancient oriental philosophy that are come down to us, are, as every one knows, few in number; and such as they are, they yet require the diligence, erudition, and sagacity of some learned man, to collect them into a body, to arrange them with method, and to explain them with perspicuity.^c

The state of philosophy in the East not sufficiently known.

II. The doctrine of the *magi*, who believed the universe to be governed by *two principles*, the one good, and the other evil, flourished in Persia. Their followers, however, were not all agreed concerning the nature of these principles;^d but this did not prevent the propagation of the main doctrine, which was received throughout a considerable part of Asia and Africa, especially among the Chaldeans, Assyrians, Syrians, and Egyptians, though with different modifications, and had even infected the Jews themselves.^e The Arabians at that time, and even afterward, were more remarkable for strength and courage than for genius and sagacity; nor do they seem, according to their own confes-

The philosophy of the Persians, Chaldeans, and Arabians.

^c The history of the oriental philosophy by Mr. Stanley, though it is not void of all kind of merit, is yet extremely defective. That learned author is so far from having exhausted his subject, that he has left it, on the contrary, in many places wholly untouched. The history of philosophy, published in Germany, by the very learned Mr. Brucker, is vastly preferable to Mr. Stanley's work; and the German author, indeed, much superior to the English one, both in point of genius and of erudition.

See Hyde's *History of the religion of the ancient Persians*, a work full of erudition and disorder, and interspersed with conjectures of the most improbable kind.

^e See a treatise of Jo. Christoph. Wolf, published at Hamburgh, in 1707, under the title of *Manichæismus ante Manichæos*. See also Mosheim's *Observations upon Cudworth's Intellectual System of the Universe*, p. 328, 423.

sion,^b to have acquired any great reputation for wisdom and philosophy before the time of Mahomet.

III. From the earliest times the Indians were distinguished by their taste for sublime knowledge and wisdom. We might, perhaps, be able to form a judgment of their philosophical tenets, if that most ancient book, which they looked upon as particularly sacred, and which they call *veda*, or the law, were brought to light, and translated into some known language. But the accounts which are given of this remarkable book, by those who have been in the Indies, are so various and irreconcilable with each other, that we must yet wait for further satisfaction on this head.ⁱ As to the Egyptians, they were divided, as every one knows, into a multitude of sects and opinions ;^k so that their labour seems exceeding fruitless, who endeavour to reduce the philosophy of this people to one system.

The wisdom
of the In-
dians and
Egyptians.

IV. But of all the different systems of philosophy that were received in Asia and Africa about the time of our Saviour, none were so detrimental to the Christian religion, as that which was styled *gnosis* or science, i. e. *the way to the true knowledge of the Deity*, and which we have above called the *oriental doctrine*, in order to distinguish it from the Grecian philosophy. It was from the bosom of this pretended oriental wisdom, that the chiefs of those sects, which in the three first centuries perplexed and afflicted the Christian church, originally issued forth. These supercilious doctors, endeavouring to accommodate to the tenets of their fantastic philosophy, the pure, the simple, and sublime doctrines of the Son of God, brought forth, as the result of this jarring composition, a multitude of idle dreams and fictions, and imposed upon their followers a system of opinions, which were partly ludicrous, and partly perplexed with intricate subtilties, and covered over with impenetrable obscurity. The ancient doctors, both Greek and Latin, who opposed these sects, considered them as so many branches that de-

The oriental
philosophy,
properly so
called.

^b See Abulpharagius, *De Moribus Arabum*, published by Pocock.

ⁱ I have lately heard that this most important, and long expected book, has been acquired by some French Jesuits, who are missionaries in the Indies, and who have sent it over to the king of France's library. It is also said, that it is already translated, or will be so immediately. See *Lettre du P. Calmette a M. de Cartigny, dans les Lettres edifiantes et curieuses des Missions Etrangeres*, xxi. Recueil, p. 455, as also Recueil xxiii. p. 161.

^k See Mosheim's *Observations on the Intellectual System*. &c. in his Latin translation of that work, tom. i. p. 415.

rived their origin from the platonic philosophy. But this was pure illusion ; an apparent resemblance between certain opinions of Plato, and some of the tenets of the eastern schools, deceived these good men, who had no knowledge but of the Grecian philosophy, and were absolutely ignorant of the oriental doctrines. Whoever compares the platonic and gnostic philosophy together, will easily perceive the wide difference that there is between them.

v. The first principles of the oriental philosophy seem perfectly consistent with the dictates of reason ;

The first principles of this philosophy.

for its first founder must undoubtedly have argued in the following manner ; “ there are many evils in this world, and men seem impelled by a natural instinct to the practice of those things which reason condemns ; but that eternal mind, from which all spirits derive their existence, must be inaccessible to all kinds of evil, and also of a most perfect and beneficent nature ; therefore the origin of those evils, with which the universe abounds, must be sought somewhere else than in the Deity. It cannot reside in him who is all perfection ; and therefore it must be *without* him. Now, there is nothing *without* or *beyond* the Deity, but *matter* ; therefore *matter* is the centre and source of all evil, of all vice.” Having taken for granted these principles, they proceeded further, and affirmed that matter was eternal, and derived its present form, not from the will of the Supreme God, but from the creating power of some inferior intelligence, to whom the world and its inhabitants owed their existence. As a proof of this assertion, they alleged that it was incredible, that the Supreme Deity, perfectly good, and infinitely removed from all evil, should either create or modify matter, which is essentially malignant and corrupt, or bestow upon it, in any degree, the riches of his wisdom and liberality. They were, however, aware of the insuperable difficulties that lay against their system ; for when they were called to explain, in an accurate and satisfactory manner, how this rude and corrupt matter came to be arranged into such a regular and harmonious frame as that of the universe, and, particularly, how celestial spirits were joined to bodies formed out of its malignant mass, they were sadly embarrassed, and found that the plainest dictates of reason declared their system incapable of defence. In this perplexity, they had recourse to wild fictions and romantic fables, in order to give an account of the formation of the world, and the origin of mankind.

VI. Those who, by mere dint of fancy and invention, endeavour to cast a light upon obscure points, or to solve great and intricate difficulties, are seldom agreed about the methods of proceeding ; and, by a necessary consequence, separate into different sects. Such was the case of the oriental philosophers, when they set themselves to explain the difficulties mentioned above. Some imagined *two eternal principles* from whence all things proceeded, the one presiding over *light*, and the other over *matter*, and by their perpetual conflict, explained the mixture of good and evil, that appears in the universe. Others maintained, that the being, which presided over matter, was not an eternal principle, but a subordinate intelligence, one of those whom the Supreme God produced from himself. They supposed that this being was moved, by a sudden impulse, to reduce to order the rude mass of matter, which lay excluded from the mansions of the Deity, and also to create the human race. A third sort fell upon a system different from the two preceding, and formed to themselves the notion of a *triumvirate* of beings, in which the *Supreme Deity* was distinguished both from the *material, evil principle*, and from the *creator* of this sublunary world. These, then, were the three leading sects of the oriental philosophy, which were subdivided into various factions, by the disputes that arose when they came to explain more fully their respective opinions, and to pursue them into all their monstrous consequences. These multiplied divisions were the natural and necessary consequences of a system which had no solid foundation, and was no more, indeed, than an airy phantom, blown up by the wanton fancies of self-sufficient men. And that these divisions did really subsist, the history of the Christian sects, that embraced this philosophy abundantly testifies.

VII. It is, however, to be observed, that, as all these sects were founded upon one common principle, their divisions did not prevent their holding, in common, certain opinions concerning the Deity, the universe, the human race, and several other subjects. They were all, therefore, unanimous in acknowledging the existence of an eternal nature, in whom dwelt the fulness of wisdom, goodness, and all other perfections, and of whom no mortal was able to form a complete idea. This great being was considered by them as a most pure and radiant *light*, diffused through the immensity of space, which they

The oriental philosophers divided in their sentiments.

Their opinions concerning the Deity.

called *pleroma*, a Greek word, which signifies fulness; and they taught concerning him, and his operations, the following things; “the *eternal nature*, infinitely perfect, and infinitely happy, having dwelt from everlasting in a profound solitude, and in a blessed tranquillity, produced, at length from *itself*, two minds of a different sex, which resembled their supreme parent in the most perfect manner. From the prolific union of these two beings others arose, which were also followed by succeeding generations; so that, in process of time, a celestial family was formed in the *pleroma*.¹ This divine progeny, being immutable in its nature, and above the power of mortality, was called, by the philosophers, *æon*,”^m a term which signifies, in the Greek language, an eternal nature. How many in number these *æons* were, was a point much controverted among the oriental sages.

VIII. “Beyond the mansions of *light*, where dwells the *Deity* with his celestial offspring, there lies a rude and unwieldy mass of *matter*, agitated by innate, turbulent, and irregular motions. One of the celestial natures descending from the *pleroma*, either by a fortuitous impulse, or in consequence of a divine commission, reduced to order this unseemly mass, adorned it with a rich variety of gifts, created men, and inferior animals of

Concern-
ing the ori-
gin of this
world.

¹ It appears highly probable, that the apostle Paul had an eye to this fantastic mythology, when, in the first chapter of his *First Epistle to Timothy*, ver. 4, he exhorts him not to *give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, &c.*

^m The word *αἰών*, or *æon*, is commonly used by the Greek writers, but in different senses. Its signification in the gnostic system is not extremely evident, and several learned men have despaired of finding out its true meaning. *Αἰών*, or *æon*, among the ancients, was used to signify the age of man, or the duration of human life. In after times, it was employed by philosophers to express the duration of spiritual and invisible beings. These philosophers used the word *σῶμα*, as the measure of corporeal and changing objects; and *αἰών*, as the measure of such as were immutable and eternal. And as God is the chief of those immutable beings which are spiritual, and consequently not to be perceived by our outward senses, his infinite and eternal duration was expressed by the term *αἰών*, or *æon*, and that is the sense in which that word is now commonly understood. It was, however, afterward attributed to other spiritual and invisible beings; and the oriental philosophers, who lived about the time of Christ's appearance upon earth, and made use of the Greek language, understood by it the *duration* of eternal and immutable things, the *space* or period of time, in which they exist. Nor did the variations, through which this word passed, end here; from expressing only the *duration* of beings, it was by a *metonymy*, employed to signify the beings themselves. Thus the Supreme Being was called *αἰών*, or *æon*; and the angels distinguished also by the title of *æons*. All this will lead us to the true meaning of that word among the gnostics. They had formed to themselves the notion of an invisible and spiritual world, composed of *entities* or *virtues*, proceeding from the Supreme Being, and succeeding each other at certain intervals of time, so as to form an *eternal chain*, of which our world was the terminating link; a notion of eternity very different from that of the platonists, who represented it as stable, permanent, and void of succession. To the beings that formed this eternal chain, the gnostics assigned a certain term of duration, and a certain sphere of action. Their terms of duration were, at first, called *αἰῶνες*, and they themselves were afterward *metonymically* distinguished by that title.

different kinds, to store it with inhabitants, and corrected its malignity by mixing with it a certain portion of light, and also of a matter celestial and divine. This creator of the world is distinguished from the Supreme Deity by the name of *demiurge*. His character is a compound of shining qualities, and insupportable arrogance; and his excessive lust of empire effaces his talents and his virtues. He claims dominion over the new world he has formed, as his sovereign right; and excluding totally the Supreme Deity from all concernment in it, he demands from mankind, for himself and his associates, divine honours."

IX. "Man is a compound of a terrestrial and corrupt body, and a soul which is of celestial origin, and, in some measure, an emanation from the divinity. This nobler part is miserably weighed down and encumbered by the body, which is the seat of all irregular lusts and impure desires. It is this body that seduces the soul from the pursuit of truth, and not only turns it from the contemplation and worship of the Supreme Being, so as to confine its homage and veneration to the Creator of this world, but also attaches it to terrestrial objects, and to the immoderate pursuit of sensual pleasures, by which its nature is totally polluted. The sovereign mind employs various means to deliver his offspring from this deplorable servitude, especially the ministry of divine messengers, whom he sends to enlighten, to admonish, and to reform the human race. In the mean time, the imperious *demiurge* exerts his power in opposition to the merciful purpose of the Supreme Being, resists the influence of those solemn invitations by which he exhorts mankind to return to him, and labours to efface the knowledge of God in the minds of intelligent beings. In this conflict, such souls, as throwing off the yoke of the creators and rulers of this world, rise to their Supreme Parent, and subdue the turbulent and sinful motions, which corrupt *matter* excites within them, shall, at the dissolution of their mortal bodies, ascend directly to the *pleroma*. Those, on the contrary, who remain in the bondage of servile superstition, and corrupt matter, shall, at the end of this life, pass into new bodies, until they awake from their sinful lethargy. In the end, however, the Supreme God shall come forth victorious, triumph over all opposition, and, having delivered from their servitude the greatest part of those souls that are imprisoned in mortal bodies, shall dissolve the frame of this

Concerning
the state and
destination of
human souls.

visible world, and involve it in a general ruin. After this solemn period, primitive tranquillity shall be restored in the universe, and God shall reign with happy spirits, in undisturbed felicity, through the everlasting ages."

x. Such were the principal tenets of the oriental philosophy. The state of letters and philosophy among the Jews comes next under consideration; and of this we may form some idea from what has been said already concerning that nation. It is chiefly to be observed, that the dark and hidden science, which they called the *kabbala*, was at this time taught and inculcated by many among that superstitious people.^a This science, in many things, bears a strong resemblance to the oriental philosophy; or, to speak more accurately, it is indeed that same philosophy accommodated to the Jewish religion, and tempered with a certain mixture of truth. Nor were the doctrines of the Grecian sages unknown to the Jews at the period now before us; since, from the time of Alexander the the Great, some of them had been admitted even into the Mosaic religion. We shall say nothing concerning the opinions which they adopted from the philosophical and theological systems of the Chaldeans, Egyptians, and Syrians.^o

xi. The Greeks in the opinion of most writers, were yet in possession of the first rank among the nations that cultivated letters and philosophy. In many places, and especially at Athens, they were a considerable number of men distinguished by their learning, acuteness, and eloquence; philosophers of all sects, who taught the doctrines of Plato, Aristotle, Zeno, and Epicurus; rhetoricians also, and men of genius, who instructed the youth in the rules of eloquence, and formed their taste for the liberal arts. So that those who had a passion for the study of oratory, resorted in multitudes to the Grecian schools, in order to perfect themselves in that noble science. Alexandria, in Egypt, was also much frequented for the same purpose, as a great number of the Grecian philosophers and rhetoricians dwelt in that city.

xii. The Romans also, at this time, made a shining figure among the polished and learned nations. All the sciences flourished at Rome. The youth of a

^a See Jo. Franc. Buddei *Introductio in Historiam Philos. Hebræorum*; as also the authors which B. Wolf mentions, with encomiums, in his *Bibliotheca Hebraica*, tom.iii.

^o See Jo. Franc. Buddei *Introductio in Historiam Philos. Hebræorum*; as also the authors recommended by Wolf in his *Bibliotheca Hebraica*, tom. iii.

higher rank were early instructed in the Greek language and eloquence. From thence they proceeded to the study of philosophy, and the laws of their country; and they finished their education by a voyage into Greece, where they not only gave the last degree of perfection to their philosophical studies, but also acquired that refined wit and elegance of taste, that served to set off their more solid attainments in the most advantageous manner.^p None of the philosophical sects were more in vogue among the Romans than the Epicureans and the Academics, which were peculiarly favoured by the great, who, soothed by their doctrines into a false security, indulged their passions without remorse, and continued in their vicious pursuits without terror. During the reign of Augustus, the culture of polite learning and of the fine arts, was held in great honour, and those that contributed with zeal and success to this, were eminently distinguished by that prince. But, after his death, learning languished without encouragement, and was neglected, because the succeeding emperors were more intent upon the arts of war and rapine, than those more amiable arts and inventions that are the fruits of leisure and peace.

XIII. With respect to the other nations, such as the Germans, Celts, and Britons, it is certain that they were not destitute of learned and ingenious men. In the other nations Among the Gauls, the people of Marseilles had long acquired a shining reputation for their progress in the sciences;^q and there is no doubt, but that the neighbouring countries received the benefit of their instructions. Among the Celts, their Druids, priests, philosophers, and legislators were highly remarkable for their wisdom; but their writings, at least such as are yet extant, are not sufficient to inform us of the nature of their philosophy.^r The Romans, indeed, introduced letters and philosophy into all the provinces which submitted to their victorious arms, in order to soften the rough manners of the savage nations, and form in them, imperceptibly, the sentiments and feelings of humanity.^s

^p See Paganani Gaudentii *Liber de Philosophiæ apud Romanos initio et progressu*, in Tertio Fasciculo Novæ Collectionis Variorum Scriptorum. Halæ, 1717.

^q See the *Histoire Littéraire de la France par des Religieux Benedictins*. Dissert. Prelim. p. 42, &c.

^r Jac. Martin, *Religion des Gaulois*, livr. i. cap. xxi. p. 175.

^s Juvenal, *Satir.* xv. ver. 110.

“Nunc totus Graias nostrasque habet orbis Athenas,
Gallia Causidicos docuit facunda Britannos,
De conducendo loquitur jam Rhetore Thule.”

CHAPTER II.

CONCERNING THE DOCTORS AND MINISTERS OF THE CHURCH, AND ITS FORM OF GOVERNMENT.

The necessity of public teachers. I. The great end of Christ's mission was to form a universal church, gathered out of all the nations of the world, and to extend the limits of this great society from age to age. But in order to this, it was necessary first to appoint *extraordinary teachers*, who, converting the Jews and Gentiles to the truth, should erect every where Christian assemblies; and then to establish *ordinary ministers*, and interpreters of the divine will, who should enforce and repeat the doctrines delivered by the former, and maintain the people in their holy profession, and in the practice of the Christian virtues. For the best system of religion must necessarily either dwindle to nothing, or be egregiously corrupted, if it is not perpetually inculcated and explained by a regular and standing ministry.

Extraordinary teachers. II. The *extraordinary teachers*, whom Christ employed to lay the foundations of his everlasting kingdom, were the XII apostles, and the LXX disciples, of whom mention has been made above. To these the evangelists are to be added, by which title those were distinguished whom the apostles sent to instruct the nations, or who of their own accord, abandoned every worldly attachment, and consecrated themselves to the sacred office of propagating the gospel.[†] In this rank, also, we must place those, to whom in the infancy of the church, the marvellous power of speaking in foreign languages which they had never learned, was communicated from above. For the person to whom the divine omnipotence and liberality had imparted the gift of tongues, might conclude, with the utmost assurance, from the gift itself, which a wise being would not bestow in vain, that he was appointed by God to minister unto the truth, and to employ his talents in the service of Christianity.[‡]

[†] See St. Paul's *Epistle to the Ephesians*, iv. 11. As also Euseb. *Hist. Eccles.* lib. iii. cap. xxxvii.

[‡] 1 Cor. xiv. 22.

III. Many have undertaken to write the history of the apostles,^w a history, which we find loaded with fables, doubts, and difficulties, when we pursue it further than the books of the New Testament, and the most ancient writers in the Christian church. In order to have a just idea of the nature, privileges, and authority of the apostolic function, we must consider an apostle as a person who was honoured with a divine commission, invested with the power of *making laws*, of *controlling and restraining the wicked*, when that was expedient, and of *working miracles*, when necessary ; and sent to mankind, *to unfold to them the divine will, to open to them the paths of salvation and immortality, and to separate from the multitude, and unite in the bonds of one sacred society, those who were attentive and obedient to the voice of God addressed to men by their ministry.*

The authority
of the apostles.

IV. The accounts we have of the LXX disciples are still more obscure than those of the apostles ; since the former are only once mentioned in the New Testament, Luke x. 1. The illustrations that we have yet remaining, relative to their character and office, are certainly composed by the more modern Greeks, and therefore can have but little authority or credit.^y Their commission extended no further than the Jewish nation, as appears from the express words of St. Luke ; though it is highly probable, that, after Christ's ascension, they performed the function of evangelists, and declared the glad tidings of salvation, and the means of obtaining it through different nations and provinces.

The LXX dis-
ciples.

V. Neither Christ himself, nor his holy apostles, have commanded any thing clearly or expressly concerning the external form of the church, and the precise method, according to which it should be governed.^z From this we may infer, that the

The external
form of the
church not
determined
by Christ.

^w The authors who have written concerning the apostles are enumerated by Sagittarius in his *Introduction to Ecclesiastical History*, ch. i. p. 2, and also by Buddæus, in his treatise, *De Ecclesia Apostolica*, p. 674.

^x See Fred. Spanheim, *De apostolis et apostolatu*, tom. ii. opp. p. 289. It is not without weighty reasons, and without having considered the matter attentively, that I have supposed the apostles invested with the power of *enacting laws*. I am sensible that some very learned men among the moderns have denied this power, but I apprehend they differ from me rather in words than in any thing else.

^y These accounts are to be seen at the end of three books, concerning the life and death of Moses, which were discovered and illustrated by Gilb. Gaulminius, and republished by Jo. Albert Fabricius, in his *Biblioth. Græc.* p. 474.

^z Those who imagine that Christ himself, or the apostles by his direction and authority, appointed a certain fixed form of church government, are not agreed what that form was. The principal opinions that have been adopted upon this head may be

regulation of this was, in some measure, to be accommodated to the time, and left to the wisdom and prudence of the chief rulers, both of the state and of the church. If,

reduced to the four following; the *first* is that of the Roman Catholics, who maintain "that Christ's intention and appointment was, that his followers should be collected into one sacred empire, subjected to the government of St. Peter and his successors, and divided, like the kingdoms of this world, into several provinces; that, in consequence thereof, Peter fixed the seat of ecclesiastical dominion at Rome, but afterward, to alleviate the burden of his office, divided the church into three greater provinces, according to the division of the world at that time, and appointed a person to preside in each, who was dignified with the title of *patriarch*; that the European patriarch resided at Rome, the Asiatic at Antioch, and the African at Alexandria; that the bishops of each province, among whom also there were various ranks, were to reverence the authority of their respective patriarchs, and that both bishops and patriarchs were to be passively subject to the supreme dominion of the Roman pontiff."^{*} This romantic account scarcely deserves a serious refutation. The *second* opinion, concerning the government of the church, makes no mention of a *supreme head*, or of *patriarchs*, constituted by divine authority, but supposes that the apostles divided the Roman empire into as many ecclesiastical provinces as there were secular, or civil ones; that the *metropolitan* bishop, *i. e.* the prelate, who resided in the capital city of each province, presided over the clergy of that province, and that the other bishops were subject to his authority. This opinion has been adopted by some of the most learned of the Romish church,† and has also been favoured by some of the most eminent British divines.‡ Some protestant writers of note have endeavoured to prove that it is not supported by sufficient evidence.§ The *third* opinion is that of those who acknowledge that, when the Christians began to multiply exceedingly, *metropolitans*, *patriarchs*, and *archbishops*, were indeed created, but only by *human* appointment and authority; though they confess, at the same time, that it is consonant to the orders and intention of Christ and his apostles, that, in every Christian church, there should be one person invested with the highest authority, and clothed with certain rights and privileges above the other doctors of that assembly. This opinion has been embraced by many English divines of the first rank in the learned world, and also by many in other countries and communions. The *fourth* and last opinion is that of the presbyterians, who affirm that Christ's intention was, that the Christian doctors and ministers should all enjoy the same rank and authority, without any sort of pre-eminence or subordination, any distinction of rights and privileges. The reader will find an ample account of these four different opinions with respect to church government in Dr. Mosheim's *Larger History of the first century*. This learned and impartial writer, who condemns with reason the *fourth* opinion, as it is explained by those bigoted Puritans, who look upon all subordination and variety of rank among the doctors of the church, as condemnable and antichristian, observes, however, with equal reason, that this opinion may be explained and modified so as to reconcile the moderate abettors of the Episcopal discipline with the less rigid Presbyterians. The opinion modified by Dr. Mosheim amounts to this; "that the Christian doctors are *equal* in this sense; that Christ has left no positive and special decree which constitutes a distinction among them, nor any *divine* commandment by which those who, in consequence of the appointments of human wisdom, are in the higher ranks, can demand, by a divine right, the obedience and submission of the inferior doctors, &c. their abstaining from the exercise of certain functions," &c.

The truth of the matter is, that Christ, by leaving this matter undetermined, has, of consequence, left Christian societies a discretionary power of modelling the government of the church in such a manner as the circumstantial reasons of times, places, &c. may require; and therefore the wisest government of the church is the best and the most divine; and every Christian society has a right to make laws for itself, provided that these laws are consistent with charity and peace, and with the fundamental doctrines and principles of Christianity.

* See Leon. Allatius, *De perpetuo consens. Eccles. Orient. et Occident*, lib. i. cap. ii. Morinus, *exercitat. Ecclesiast.* lib. i. *Exer.* 1.

† Petrus de Marca, *de concord. sacerdot. et imperii*, lib. vi. cap. i. Morinus, *Exerc. Eccl.* lib. i. *Ex.* xviii. Pagi *Critica in annal. Baronii*, ad A. xxxvii. tom. i. p. 29.

‡ Hammond, *Diss. de Episcop.* Beverege. *Cod. Canon. Vet. Eccles. Vindic.* lib. ii. cap. v. tom. ii. Patr. Apost. Usser, *De Origine Episcop. et Metropol.* p. 20.

§ Basnage, *Hist. de l'Eglise*, tom. i. livr. i. cap. viii. Boehmer, *Annot. ad Petrum de Marca de concordia sacerdot. et imperii*, p. 143.

however, it is true, that the apostles acted by divine inspiration, and in conformity with the commands of their blessed Master ; and this no Christian can call in question, then it follows, that that form of government which the primitive churches borrowed from that of Jerusalem, the first Christian assembly established by the apostles themselves, must be esteemed as of divine institution. But from this it would be wrong to conclude that such a form is immutable, and ought to be invariably observed ; for this a great variety of events may render impossible. In those early times, every Christian church consisted of the *people*, their *leaders*, and the *ministers* or *deacons*, and these, indeed, belong essentially to every religious society. The people were, undoubtedly, the first in authority ; for the apostles showed, by their own example, that nothing of moment was to be carried on or determined without the consent of the assembly,^a and such a method of proceeding was both prudent and necessary in those critical times.

The form of
the first
Church at Je-
rusalem.

vi. It was, therefore, the assembly of the people, which chose their own rulers and teachers, or received them, by a free and authoritative consent, when recommended by others. The same people rejected or confirmed, by their suffrages, the laws that were proposed by their rulers to the assembly ; excommunicated profligate and unworthy members of the church, restored the penitent to their forfeited privileges, passed judgment upon the different subjects of controversy and dissension, that arose in their community ; examined and decided the disputes which happened between the elders and deacons ; and, in a word, exercised all that authority which belongs to such as are invested with the sovereign power.

The rights of
the people.

The people, indeed, had, in some measure, purchased these privileges by administering to the support of their rulers, ministers, and poor, and by offering large and generous contributions, when the safety or interests of the community rendered them necessary. In these supplies each one bore a part proportioned to his circumstances ; and the various gifts which were thus brought into the public assemblies, were called *oblations*.

Their
oblations.

^a Acts i. 15. vi. 3. xv. 4. xxi. 22.

VII. There reigned among the members of the Christian church, however distinguished they were by worldly rank and titles, not only an amiable harmony, but also a perfect equality. This appeared by the *feasts of charity*, in which all were indiscriminately assembled; by the names of *brethren* and *sisters*, with which they mutually saluted each other; and by several circumstances of a like nature. Nor, in this first century, was the distinction made between Christians of a more or less perfect order, which took place afterward. Whoever acknowledged Christ as the Saviour of mankind, and made a solemn profession of his confidence in him, was immediately baptized and received into the church. But, in process of time, when the church began to flourish, and its members to increase, it was thought prudent and necessary to divide Christians into two orders, distinguished by the names of *believers* and *catechumens*. The former were those who had been solemnly admitted into the church by baptism, and in consequence thereof, were instructed in all the mysteries of religion, had access to all the parts of divine worship, and were authorized to vote in the ecclesiastical assemblies. The latter were such as had not yet been dedicated to God and Christ by baptism, and were, therefore, admitted neither to the public prayers, nor to the holy communion, nor to the ecclesiastical assemblies.

VIII. The rulers of the church were called either *presbyters*,^b or *bishops*, which two titles are, in the New Testament, undoubtedly applied to the same order of men.^c These were persons of eminent gravity, and such as had distinguished themselves by their superior sanctity and merit.^d Their particular functions were not always the same: for while some of them confined their labours to the instruction of the people, others contributed in different ways to the edification of the church. Hence the distinction between *teaching* and *ruling presbyters* has been adopted by certain learned men. But, if ever this distinction existed, which I neither affirm nor deny, it certainly did not continue long; since it is

^b The word *presbyter*, or elder, is taken from the Jewish institution, and signifies rather the venerable prudence and wisdom of old age, than age itself.

^c Acts xx. 17, 28. Phil. i. 1. Tit. i. 5, 7. 1 Tim. iii. 1.

^d 1 Tim. iii. 1. Tit. i. 5.

manifest, that St. Paul requires that all bishops or presbyters be qualified and ready to teach and instruct.^e

ix. Among the first professors of Christianity, there were but few men of learning; few, who had capacity enough to insinuate into the minds of a ^{The prophets.} gross and ignorant multitude, the knowledge of divine things. God therefore, in his infinite wisdom, judged it necessary to raise up, in many churches, extraordinary teachers, who were to discourse, in the public assemblies, upon the various points of the Christian doctrine, and to treat with the people, in the name of God, as guided by his direction, and clothed with his authority. Such were the *prophets of the New Testament*,^f an order of men, whose commission is too much limited by the writers, who confine it to the interpretation of the books of the Old Testament, and especially the prophecies.^g For it is certain, that they, who claimed the rank of *prophets*, were invested with the power of censuring publicly such as had been guilty of any irregularity. But, to prevent the abuses, that designing men might make of this institution, by pretending to this extraordinary character, in order to execute unworthy ends, there were always present in the public auditories, judges, divinely appointed, who, by certain and infallible marks, were able to distinguish the false prophets from the true. This order of *prophets* ceased, when the want of teachers which gave rise to it, was abundantly supplied.

x. The church was, undoubtedly, provided from the beginning with inferior ministers or *deacons*. No society can be without its servants, and still less such societies as those of the first Christians were. ^{Deacons of the church at Jerusalem.} And it appears not only probable, but evident, that the *young men*, who carried away the dead bodies of Ananias and Sapphira, were the subordinate ministers, or *deacons*, of the church of Jerusalem, who attended the apostles to

^e 1 Tim. iii. 2, &c. See, concerning the word *presbyter*, the illustrations given by the learned Vitringa, *De synagoga vetere*, lib. iii. part i. cap. i. p. 609; and by the venerable Jo. Bened. Carpzovius, in his *Exerc. in Epist. ad Hebræos ex Philone*, p. 499. As to the *presbyters* themselves, and the nature of their office, the reader will receive much satisfaction from the accounts that are given of that order by Budæus, *De Ecclesia Apostolica*, cap. vi. p. 719, and by the most learned Pfaffius, *De originibus juris eccles.* p. 49.

^f Rom. xiii. 6. 1 Cor. xii. 28. xiv. 3, 29. Eph. iv. 11.

^g See Mosheim's dissertation *De illis qui Prophetæ vocantur in Novo Fœdere*, which is to be found in the second volume of his *Syntagma Dissertationum ad Historiam Eccles. pertinentium*.

execute their orders.^h These first *deacons* of the church, being chosen from among the Jews, who were born in Palestine, were suspected by the foreign Jews of partiality in distributing the offerings which were presented for the support of the poor.ⁱ To remedy, therefore this disorder, seven other deacons were chosen, by order of the apostles, and employed in the service of that part of the church at Jerusalem, which was composed of the foreign Jews, converted to Christianity. Of these new ministers, six were foreigners, as appears by their names; the seventh was chosen out of the proselytes, of whom there were a certain number among the first Christians at Jerusalem, and to whom it was reasonable, that some regard should be shown in the election of the deacons, as well as to the foreign Jews. All the other Christian Churches followed the example of that of Jerusalem, in whatever related to the choice and office of the deacons. Some, particularly the eastern churches, elected *deaconesses*, and chose, for that purpose, matrons or widows of eminent sanctity, who also ministered to the necessities of the poor, and performed

^h Acts v. 6, 10.

Those who may be surprised at my affirming, that the *young men*, mentioned in the passages here referred to, were the *deacons*, or ministers of the church of Jerusalem, are desired to consider, that the words νεωτεροι, νεανισκοι, i. e. *young men*, are not always used to determine the age of the persons to whom they are applied, but are frequently employed to point out their *offices*, or functions, both by the Greek and Latin writers. The same rule of interpretation that diversifies the sense of the word *presbyter*, which, as all know, signifies sometimes the *age* of a person, and, at other times, his *function*, is manifestly applicable to the word before us. As, therefore, by the title of *presbyters*, the heads or rulers of a society are pointed out, without any regard to their age; so by the term *young men*, we are often to understand *ministers* or *servants*, because such are generally in the flower of youth. This interpretation may be confirmed by examples, which are not wanting even in the New Testament. Christ himself seems to attribute this sense to the word νεωτερος, Luke xxii. 26, ο μειζων εν υμιν, γενεσθαι ως ο νεωτερος. Our Saviour explains the term μειζων, by the word ηγουμενος, and it therefore signifies a *presbyter*, or ruler; he also substitutes, a little after, ο διδασκων, in the place of νεωτερος, which confirms our interpretation in the most unanswerable manner. So that μειζων, and νεωτερος are not here indications of certain ages, but of certain functions, and the precept of Christ amounts to this; "he that performs the office of a presbyter or elder among you, let him not think himself superior to the ministers or deacons." The passage of 1 Pet. v. 5, is still more express to our purpose; Ομοιως νεωτεροι, υποταγητε τοις πρεσβυτεροις. It is evident from the preceding verses, that *presbyter* here is the name of an office, and points out a ruler or teacher of the church; and that the term νεωτερος is also to be interpreted, not *young men* in point of age, but the *ministers*, or servants of the church. St. Peter, having solemnly exhorted the presbyters, not to abuse the power that was committed to them, addresses his discourse to the ministers, or *deacons* of the church; "but likewise, ye younger, i. e. ministers and deacons, despise not the orders of the presbyters or elders, but perform cheerfully whatsoever they command you." In the same sense, does St. Luke employ this term, Acts v. 6, 10, and his νεωτεροι and νεανισκοι are, undoubtedly, the deacons of the church of Jerusalem, of whom the Greek Jews complain afterward to the apostles, Acts vi. 1, &c. on account of the partial distribution of the alms. I might confirm the sense of the word *young men* by numberless citations from Greek and Roman writers, and a variety of authors, sacred and profane; but this is not the proper place for demonstrations of this nature.

ⁱ Acts vi. 1, &c.

several other offices, that tended to the maintenance of order and decency in the church.^k

XI. Such was the constitution of the Christian church in its infancy, when its assemblies were neither numerous nor splendid. Three or four presbyters, ^{Bishops.} men of remarkable piety and wisdom, ruled these small congregations in perfect harmony, nor did they stand in need of any president or superior to maintain concord and order where no dissensions were known. But the number of the presbyters and deacons increasing with that of the churches, and the sacred work of the ministry growing more painful and weighty, by a number of additional duties, these new circumstances required new regulations. It was then judged necessary, that one man of distinguished gravity and wisdom should preside in the council of presbyters, in order to distribute among his colleagues their several tasks, and to be a centre of union to the whole society. This person was, at first, styled the *angel*^l of the church to which he belonged, but was afterward distinguished by the name of *bishop*, or inspector; a name borrowed from the Greek language, and expressing the principal part of the episcopal function, which was to inspect into, and superintend the affairs of the church. It is highly probable, that the church of Jerusalem, grown considerably numerous, and deprived of the ministry of the apostles, who were gone to instruct the other nations, was the first which chose a president or bishop. And it is no less probable, that the other churches followed by degrees such a respectable example.

XII. Let none, however, confound the bishops of this primitive and golden period of the church with those of whom we read in the following ages. For ^{The nature of the episcopal dignity in this century.} though they were both distinguished by the same name, yet they differed extremely, and that in many respects. A bishop, during the first and second century, was a person who had the care of one Christian assembly, which, at that time, was, generally speaking, small enough to be contained in a private house. In this assembly he acted not so much with the authority of a *master*, as with the zeal and diligence of a faithful *servant*. He instructed the people, performed the several parts of divine worship, attend-

^k For an ample account of the *deacons* and *deaconesses* of the primitive church, see Zeigler, *De diaconis et diaconissis*, cap. xix. p. 347. Basnagii *Annal. Polit. Eccles. ad A. xxxv.* tom. i. p. 450. Bingham, *Orig. Eccles.* lib. ii. cap. xx.

^l Rev. ii. 3.

ed the sick, and inspected into the circumstances and supplies of the poor. He charged, indeed, the presbyters with the performance of those duties and services, which the multiplicity of his engagements rendered it impossible for him to fulfil; but had not the power to decide or enact any thing without the consent of the presbyters and people. And, though the episcopal office was both laborious and singularly dangerous, yet its revenues were extremely small, since the church had no certain income, but depended on the gifts or *oblations* of the multitude, which were, no doubt, inconsiderable, and were, moreover, to be divided between the bishops, presbyters, deacons, and poor.

XIII. The power and jurisdiction of the bishops were not long confined to these narrow limits, but soon ex-

The origin of dioceses and chorepiscopi.

tended themselves, and that by the following means. The bishops, who lived in the cities, had, either by their own ministry or that of their presbyters, erected new churches in the neighbouring towns and villages. These churches, continuing under the inspection and ministry of the bishops, by whose labours and counsels they had been engaged to embrace the gospel, grew imperceptibly into ecclesiastical provinces, which the Greeks afterward called *dioceses*. But as the bishop of the city could not extend his labours and inspection to all these churches in the country and in the villages, so he appointed certain suffragans or deputies to govern and to instruct these new societies; and they were distinguished by the title of *chorepiscopi*, i. e. country bishops. This order held the middle rank between bishops and presbyters, being inferior to the former, and superior to the latter.

XIV. The churches, in those ancient times, were entirely independent; none of them subject to any foreign jurisdiction, but each one governed by its own rulers and its own laws. For, though the churches founded by the apostles, had this particular deference shown them, that they were consulted in difficult and doubtful cases; yet they had no judicial authority, no sort of supremacy over the others, nor the least right to enact laws for them. Nothing, on the contrary, is more evident than the perfect equality that reigned among the primitive churches; nor does there even appear, in this first century, the smallest trace of that association of provincial churches, from which *councils* and *metropolitans* derive their origin. It was only in the second

Whether councils and metropolitans are to be placed in the first century.

century that the custom of holding councils commenced in Greece, from whence it soon spread through the other provinces."^m

xv. The principal place among the Christian doctors, and among those also, who by their writings were instrumental in the progress of the truth, is due to the apostles and certain of their disciples, who were set apart and inspired by God, to record the actions of Christ and his apostles. The writings of these holy men, which are comprehended in the books of the New Testament, are in the hands of all who profess themselves Christians. Those who are desirous of particular information with respect to the history of these sacred books, and the arguments which prove their divine authority, their genuineness, and purity, must consult the learned authors who have written professedly upon that matter."

The principal writers, the apostles and their disciples.

xvi. The opinions, or rather the conjectures, of the learned, concerning the time when the books of the New Testament were collected into one volume, as also about the authors of that collection, are extremely different. This important question is attended with great and almost insuperable difficulties to us in these latter times.ⁿ It is, however, sufficient for us to know, that, before the middle of the second century, the greatest part of the books of the New Testament were read in every Christian society throughout the world, and received as a divine rule of faith and manners. Hence it appears, that these sacred writings were carefully separated from several human compositions upon the same subject, either by some of the apostles themselves, who lived so long, or by their disciples and successors, who were spread abroad through all nations.^p We are well assured,^q

The time when the canon was fixed

^m The meeting of the church of Jerusalem, mentioned in the xvth chapter of the Acts, is commonly considered as the *first Christian council*. But this notion arises from the manifest abuse of the word *council*. That meeting was only of one church; and, if such a meeting be called a *council*, it will follow that there were innumerable councils in the primitive times. But every one knows, that a *council* is an assembly of deputies or commissioners sent from several churches, associated by certain bonds in a general body, and therefore the supposition above-mentioned falls to the ground.

ⁿ For the history of the books of the New Testament, see particularly Jo. Alb. Fabricius, *Biblioth. Græc.* lib. iv. cap. v. p. 122—127. The same learned author has given an accurate list of the writers, who have defended the divinity of these sacred books, in his *Delectus Argumentorum et Syllabus Scriptorum pro verit. relig. Christianæ*, cap. xxvi. p. 502.

^o See Jo. Ens. *Bibliotheca S. seu Diatriba de librorum N. T. Canone*, published at Amsterdam in 1710; as also Jo. Mill. *Prolegomen. ad Nov. Test.* § 1, p. 23.

^p See Frickius, *De cura Veteris Ecclesiæ circa Canon.* cap. iii. p. 86.

^q This is expressly affirmed by Eusebius, in the xxivth chapter of the third book of his *Ecclesiastical History*.

that the *four gospels* were collected during the life of St. John, and that the three first received the approbation of this divine apostle. And why may we not suppose that the other books of the New Testament were gathered together at the same time?

xvii. What renders this highly probable is, that the most urgent necessity required its being done. For, not long after Christ's ascension into heaven, several histories of his life and doctrines, full of pious frauds and fabulous wonders, were composed, by persons whose intentions, perhaps, were not bad, but whose writings discovered the greatest superstition and ignorance. Nor was this all; productions appeared which were imposed upon the world by fraudulent men, as the writings of the holy apostles.^r These apocryphal and spurious writings must have produced a sad confusion, and rendered both the history and the doctrine of Christ uncertain, had not the rulers of the church used all possible care and diligence in separating the books that were truly apostolical and divine from all that spurious trash, and conveying them down to posterity in one volume.

xviii. The writer, whose fame surpassed that of all others in this century, the apostles excepted, was Clemens, bishop of Rome. The accounts which remain of his life, actions, and death, are for the most part uncertain.^s *Two Epistles to the Corinthians*,^t written in Greek, have been attributed to him, of which the *second* has been looked upon as spurious, and the *first* as genuine, by many learned writers.^u But even this latter seems to have been corrupted and interpolated by some ignorant and presumptuous author, who appears to have

^r Such of these writings as are yet extant have been carefully collected by the learned Fabricius, in his *Codex Apocryphus Novi Testamenti*, which work is published in two volumes. Many ingenious and learned observations have been made on these spurious books by the celebrated Beausobre, in his *Histoire Critique des dogmes de Manichee*, livr. ii. p. 337, &c.

^s After Tillemont, Cotelierius and Grabe have given some accounts of this great man. And all that has been said concerning him by the best and most credible writers, has been collected by Rondini, in the first of two books published at Rome in the year 1706, under the following title, *Libri duo de S. Clemente, Papa, et Martyre ejusque Basilica in urbe Roma*.

^t J. A. Fabricius, in the vii chapter of the fourth book of his *Bibliotheca Græca* mentions the editions that have been given of St. Clement's epistles. To this account, we must add the edition published at Cambridge, in 1718, which is preferable to the preceding ones in many respects.

^u See the ample account that is given of these two Greek epistles of Clemens, by the learned Dr. Lardner, in the first volume of the second part of his valuable work, entitled, *The Credibility of the Gospel History*, &c. &c.

Apocryphal
and spurious
writings.

Clemens,
bishop of
Rome.

been displeased at observing a defect of learning and genius in the writings of so great a man as Clemens.*

XIX. The learned are now unanimous in regarding the other writings which bear the name of Clemens, viz. the *Apostolic Canons*, the *Apostolic Constitutions*, the *Recognitions of Clemens and Clementina*,^x as spurious productions ascribed by some impostor to this venerable prelate, in order to procure them a high degree of authority.^y The *Apostolical Canons*, which consist of LXXXV *ecclesiastical laws*, contain a view of the church government and discipline received among the Greek and oriental Christians in the second and third century. The *viii books of Apostolical Constitutions* are the work of some austere and melancholy author, who, having taken it into his head to reform the Christian worship, which he looked upon as degenerated from its original purity, made no scruple to prefix to his rules the names of the apostles, that thus they might be more speedily and favourably received.^z The *Recognitions of Clemens*, which differ very little from the *Clementina*, are the witty and agreeable productions of an Alexandrian Jew, well versed in philosophy. They were written in the third century, with a design to answer, in a new manner, the objections of the Jews, philosophers, and gnostics, against the Chris-

The writings
falsely attri-
buted to him.

* See J. Bapt. Cotelerii *Patres Apost.* tom. i. p. 133, and Bernardi *Adnotatiuncula in Clementem*, in the last edition of these *father's* published by Le Clerc. The learned Wotton has endeavoured, though without success, in his observations on the epistles of Clemens, to refute the annotations above mentioned.

† x Beside these writings attributed to Clemens, we may reckon *Two Epistles* which the learned Wetstein found in a Syriac version of the New Testament, which he took the pains to translate from Syriac into Latin, and has subjoined both the original and the translation to his famous edition of the Greek Testament, published at Amsterdam in two volumes in folio, in the years 1751 and 1752. The title prefixed to these epistles is as follows: *Duæ Epistolæ S. Clementis Romani Discipuli Petri Apostoli*, quas ex Codice Manuscripto Novi Test. Syriaci nunc primum erutas, cum versione Latina adposita edidit Jo. Jacobus Wetstenius. The manuscript of the Syriac version, from whence these epistles were taken, was procured by the good offices of Sir James Porter, a judicious patron of literature and men of letters, who, at that time, was British ambassador at Constantinople. The authenticity of these epistles is boldly maintained by Wetstein, and learnedly opposed by Dr. Lardner, in a *Dissertation upon the two Epistles ascribed to Clement of Rome, lately published by Mr. Wetstein, &c.* The celebrated professor Venema of Franeker suspected also the spuriousness of these epistles; see an account of his controversy with Wetstein on that subject, in the *Bibliothèque des Sciences et des Beaux Arts*, tom. ii. p. 51, &c. p. 311.

y For an account of the fate of these writings, and the editions that have been given of them, it will be proper to consult two dissertations of the learned Itigius; the one *De Patribus Apostolicis*, which he has prefixed to his *Bibliotheca Patrum Apostolicorum*; and the other *De Pseudepigraphis Apostolicis*, which he has subjoined to the appendix of his book *De Hæresiarchis Aevi Apostolici*. See also Fabricius's *Bibliotheca Græca*, lib. v. cap. i. p. 31, &c. and lib. vi. cap. i. p. 4.

z Budæus has collected the various opinions of the learned concerning the *Apostolical Canons and Constitutions*, in his *Isagoge in Theologiam*, part ii. ch. v. p. 746.

tian religion ; and the careful perusal of them will be extremely useful to such as are curious of information with respect to the state of the Christian church in the primitive times.^a

xx. Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, succeeds Clemens in the list of the *Apostolic Fathers*, among whom were placed such Christian doctors as had conversed with the apostles themselves, or their disciples. This pious and venerable man, who was the disciple and familiar friend of the apostles, was, by the order of Trajan, brought to Rome, and exposed to wild beasts in the public theatre, where he suffered martyrdom with the utmost constancy.^b There are yet extant several epistles, attributed to him, concerning the authenticity of which there have been, however, tedious and warm disputes among the learned, which still subsist. Of these epistles, seven are said to have been written by this eminent martyr, during his journey from Antioch to Rome ; and these the most of learned men acknowledge to be genuine, as they stand in the edition that was published in the last century from a manuscript in the Medicean library. The others are generally rejected as spurious. As to my own sentiments of this matter, though I am willing to adopt this opinion as preferable to any other, yet I cannot help looking upon the authenticity of the *Epistle to Polycarp* as extremely dubious, on account of the difference of style ; and, indeed, the whole question, relating to the epistles of St. Ignatius in general, seems to me to labour under much obscurity, and to be embarrassed with many difficulties.^c

xxi. The *Epistle to the Philippians*, which is ascribed to Polycarp bishop of Smyrna, who, in the middle of the second century, suffered martyrdom in a venerable and advanced age, is looked upon by some as genuine ; by others, as spurious ; and it is no easy matter to determine this question.^d The *Epistle of Barnabas* was the production of some Jew, who,

^a See, for a full account of this work, Mosheim's dissertation, *De turbata per recentiores Platonici Ecclesia*, § 34, p. 174. This dissertation is in the first volume of that learned work, which our author published some years ago under the title of *Synagma Dissertationum ad Historiam Ecclesiasticam pertinentium*.

^b See Tillemont's *Memoires pour servir a l'Histoire de l'Eglise*, tom. ii. part ii. p. 42—80.

^c For an account of this controversy, concerning the genuineness of the epistles of Ignatius, it will be proper to consult the *Bibliotheca Græca* of Fabricius, lib. v. cap. i. p. 33—47.

^d For an account of this martyr, and of the epistle attributed to him, see Tillemont's *Memoires*, &c. vol. ii. p. 287 ; as also Fabricii *Biblioth. Græca*, lib. v. cap. i. p. 47.

most probably, lived in this century, and whose mean abilities and superstitious attachment to Jewish fables show, notwithstanding the uprightness of his intentions, that he must have been a very different person from the true Barnabas, who was St. Paul's companion.^e The work, which is entitled *The Shepherd of Hermas*, because the angel, who bears the principal part in it, is represented in the form and habit of a shepherd, was composed in the second century by Hermas, who was brother to Pius bishop of Rome.^f This whimsical and visionary writer has taken the liberty to invent several dialogues or conversations between God and the angels, in order to insinuate, in a more easy and agreeable manner, the precepts which he thought useful and salutary, into the minds of his readers. But indeed the discourse, which he puts into the mouths of those celestial beings, is more insipid and senseless than what we commonly hear among the meanest of the multitude.^g

XXII. We may here remark in general, that these apostolic fathers, and the other writers, who, in the infancy of the church, employed their pens in the cause of Christianity, were neither remarkable for their learning nor their eloquence. On the contrary, they express the most pious and admirable sentiments in the plainest and most illiterate style.^h This, indeed, is rather a matter of honour than of reproach to the Christian cause; since we see, from the conversion of a great part of mankind to the gospel by the ministry of weak and illiterate men, that the progress of Christianity is not to be attributed to human means, but to a divine power.

The general character of the apostolic fathers.

^e See Tillemont's *Memoires*, &c. vol. i. part iii. p. 1043. Ittigius's *Select. Hist. Eccles. Capita*, § 1, cap. i. § 14, p. 173, and lib. v. cap. i. § 4, p. 4.

^f This now appears with the utmost evidence from a very ancient fragment of a small book, concerning the canon of the Holy Scriptures, which the learned Lud. Anton. Muratori published some years ago from an ancient manuscript in the library at Milan, and which is to be found in the *Antiq. Italicar. medii ævi*, tom. iii. diss. xliii. p. 853.

^g We are indebted for the best edition of the *Shepherd of Hermas*, to Fabricius, who has added it to the third volume of his *Codex Apocryphus N. Testamenti*. We find also some account of this writer in the *Biblioth. Græca*, of the same learned author, book v. chap. ix. § 9, p. 7, and also in Ittigius's dissertation, *De Patribus Apostolicis*, § 55, p. 184, &c.

^h All the writers mentioned in this chapter are usually called *apostolic fathers*. Of these writers, Jo. Bapt. Cotelerius, and after him Le Clerc, have published a collection in two volumes, accompanied both with their own annotations and the remarks of other learned men.

CHAPTER III.

CONCERNING THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN THIS CENTURY.

I. The whole of the Christian religion is comprehended in two great points, of which the first regards what we are to believe, and the other relates to our conduct and actions; or, to express the matter more briefly, the gospel presents to us objects of *faith* and rules of *practice*. The former are expressed by the apostles by the term *mystery* or the *truth*; and the latter by that of *godliness* or *piety*.¹ The rule and standard of both are those books which contain the Revelation, that God made of his will to persons chosen for that purpose, whether before or after the birth of Christ. And these divine books are usually called *The Old and New Testament*.

The nature of
the Christian
religion.

II. The apostles and their disciples took all possible care, and that in the earliest times of the church, that these sacred books might be in the hands of all Christians, that they might be read and explained in the assemblies of the faithful, and thus contribute, both in private and in public, to excite and nourish in the minds of Christians a fervent zeal for the truth, and a firm attachment to the ways of piety and virtue. Those who performed the office of interpreters, studied above all things plainness and perspicuity. At the same time it must be acknowledged, that, even in this century, several Christians adopted that absurd and corrupt custom, used among the Jews, of darkening the plain words of the holy Scriptures by insipid and forced allegories, and of drawing them violently from their proper and natural signification, in order to extort from them certain mysterious and hidden significations. For a proof of this, we need go no further than the *epistle of Barnabas*, which is yet extant.

Method of in-
terpreting the
Scriptures.

III. The method of teaching the sacred doctrines of religion was, at this time, most simple, far removed from all the subtile rules of philosophy, and all the precepts of human art. This appears abundantly, not only in the writings of the apostles, but also in all those of the second century, which have survived the ruins of time. Neither did the apostles, or their disciples, ever think of collecting into a regular system the principal doctrines of

Of teaching
religion.

the Christian religion, or of demonstrating them in a scientific and geometrical order. The beautiful and candid simplicity of these early ages rendered such philosophical niceties unnecessary; and the great study of those who embraced the gospel was rather to express its divine influence in their dispositions and actions, than to examine its doctrines with an excessive curiosity, or to explain them by the rules of human wisdom.

iv. There is indeed extant, a brief summary of the principal doctrines of Christianity in that *form*, which bears the name of the *Apostles' Creed*, and which, The Apostles' Creed. from the fourth century downward, was almost generally considered as a production of the apostles. All, however, who have the least knowledge of antiquity, look upon this opinion as entirely false and destitute of all foundation.^k There is much more reason and judgment in the opinion of those, who think that this creed was not all composed at once, but from small beginnings was imperceptibly augmented in proportion to the growth of heresy, and according to the exigencies and circumstances of the church, from whence it was designed to banish the errors that daily arose.^l

v. In the earliest times of the church, all who professed firmly to believe that Jesus was the only Redeemer of the world, and who, in consequence of this profession, promised to live in a manner conformable to the purity of his holy religion, were immediately received among the disciples of Christ. This was all the preparation for *baptism* then required; and a more accurate instruction in the doctrines of Christianity was to be administered to them after their receiving that sacrament. But when Christianity had acquired more consistence, and churches rose to the true God and his eternal Son, almost in every nation, this custom was changed for the wisest and most solid reasons. Then none were admitted to baptism, but such as had been previously instructed in the principal points of Christianity, and had also given satisfactory proofs of pious dispositions and upright

The distinction between catechumens and believers.

^k See Budæus's *Isagoge ad Theologiam*, lib. i. cap. ii. § 2, p. 441; as also Walchii *Introductio in Libros Symbolicos*, lib. i. cap. ii. p. 87.

^l This opinion is confirmed in the most learned and ingenious manner by Sir Peter King, in his *History of the Apostles' Creed*. Such, however, as read this valuable work with pleasure, and with a certain degree of prepossession, would do well to consider, that its learned author, upon several occasions, has given us conjectures instead of proofs, and also that his conjectures are not always so happy, as justly to command our assent.

intentions. Hence arose the distinction between *catechumens* who are in a state of probation, and under the instruction of persons appointed for that purpose; and *believers*, who were consecrated by baptism, and thus initiated into all the mysteries of the Christian faith.

VI. The methods of instructing the *catechumens* differed according to their various capacities. Those, in whom the natural force of reason was small, were taught no more than the fundamental principles and truths, which are, as it were, the basis of Christianity. Those, on the contrary, whom their instructors judged capable of comprehending, in some measure, the whole system of divine truth, were furnished with superior degrees of knowledge; and nothing was concealed from them, which could have any tendency to render them firm in their profession, and to assist them in arriving at Christian perfection. The care of instructing such was committed to persons who were distinguished by their gravity and wisdom, and also by their learning and judgment. And from hence it comes, that the ancient doctors generally divide their flock into two classes; the one comprehending such as were solidly and thoroughly instructed, the other, those who were acquainted with little more than the first principles of religion; nor do they deny that the methods of instruction applied to these two sorts of persons were extremely different.

VII. The Christians took all possible care to accustom their children to the study of the Scriptures, and to instruct them in the doctrines of their holy religion; and schools were every where erected for this purpose, even from the very commencement of the Christian church. We must not, however, confound the *schools* designed only for children, with the *gymnasias*, or academies of the ancient Christians, erected in several large cities, in which persons of riper years, especially such as aspired to be public teachers, were instructed in the different branches both of human learning and of sacred erudition. We may, undoubtedly, attribute to the apostles themselves, and their injunctions to their disciples, the excellent establishments, in which the youth destined to the holy ministry received an education suitable to the solemn office they were to undertake.^m St. John erected a school

The catechumens differently instructed.

The care of the first Christians in the education of their youth.

of this kind at Ephesus, and one of the same nature was founded by Polycarp at Smyrna.ⁿ But none of these were in greater repute than that which was established at Alexandria,^o which was commonly called the *catechetical school*, and is generally supposed to have been erected by St. Mark.^p

VIII. The ancient Christians are supposed by many to have had a *secret doctrine*; and if by this be meant, that they did not teach all in the same manner, or reveal all at once, and to all indiscriminately, The secret doctrine, in what it consisted. the sublime mysteries of religion, there is nothing in this that may not be fully justified. It would have been improper, for example, to propose to those, who were yet to be converted to Christianity, the more difficult doctrines of the gospel, which surpass the comprehension of imperfect mortals. Such were, therefore, first instructed in those points which are more obvious and plain, until they became capable of higher and more difficult attainments in religious knowledge. Nay, more; even those who were already admitted into the society of Christians, were, in point of instruction, differently dealt with according to their respective capacities. Those who consider the *secret doctrine* of this century in any other light, or give to it a greater extent than what we have here attributed to it, confound the superstitious practices of the following ages, with the simplicity of the discipline which prevailed at the time of which we write.^q

IX. The lives and manners of the Christians in this century, are highly celebrated by most authors, and recommended to succeeding generations as unspotted models of piety and virtue. The lives and manners of the first Christians. And if these encomiums be confined to the greatest part of those, who embraced Christianity in the infancy of the church, they

ⁿ Irenæus, *adv. Hæres.* lib. ii. cap. xxii. p. 148, ed. Massuet. Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.* lib. v. cap. xx. p. 188.

^o The Alexandrian school was renowned for a succession of learned doctors, as we find by the accounts of Eusebius and St. Jerome; for, after St. Mark, Pantænus, Clemens Alexandrinus, Origen, and many others, taught in it the doctrines of the gospel, and rendered it a famous seminary for Christian philosophy and religious knowledge. There were also at Rome, Antioch, Cæsarea, Edessa, and in several other places, schools of the same nature, though not all of equal reputation.

^p See the dissertation of Schmidius, *De Schola Catechetica Alexandrina*; as also Aulsius, *Delle Scuole Sacre*, book ii. ch. i. ii. p. 5—17, and ch. xxi. p. 92. The curious reader will find a learned account of the more famous Christian schools in the eastern parts, at *Edessa*, *Nisibis*, and *Seleucia*, and indeed of the ancient schools in general, in Assemanus's *Biblioth. Oriental. Clement. Vaticanæ*, tom. iii. part. ii. p. 914—919.

^q Many learned observations upon the *secret discipline*, have been collected by the celebrated Christoph. Matt. Pfaffius, in his *Dissert. poster. de Præjudiciis Theolog.* § 13, p. 149, &c. in *Primitiis Tubingensibus*.

are certainly distributed with justice. But many run into extremes upon this head, and estimating the lives and manners of all by the illustrious examples of some eminent saints, or the sublime precepts and exhortations of certain pious doctors, fondly imagine that every appearance of vice and disorder was banished from the first Christian societies. The greatest part of those authors, who have written concerning the innocence and sanctity of the primitive Christians, have fallen into this agreeable error. And a gross error indeed it is, as the strongest testimonies too evidently prove.

x. One of the circumstances which contributed chiefly to preserve at least an external appearance of sanctity in the Christian church, was the right of excluding from thence, and from all participation of the sacred rites and ordinances of the gospel, such as had been guilty of enormous transgressions, and to whom repeated exhortations to repentance and amendment had been administered in vain. This right was vested in the church, from the earliest period of its existence, by the apostles themselves, and was exercised by each Christian assembly upon its respective members. The rulers or doctors denounced the persons whom they thought unworthy of the privileges of church communion, and the people, freely approving or rejecting their judgment, pronounced the decisive sentence. It was not, however, irrevocable; for such as gave undoubted signs of their sincere repentance, and declared their solemn resolutions of future reformation, were readmitted into the church, however enormous their crimes had been; but, in case of a relapse, their second exclusion became absolutely irreversible.^r

xi. It will easily be imagined, that unity and peace could not reign long in the church, since it was composed of Jews and Gentiles, who regarded each other with the bitterest aversion. Beside, as the converts to Christianity could not extirpate radically the prejudices which had been formed in their minds by education, and confirmed by time, they brought with them into the bosom of the church more or less of the errors of their former religions. Thus the seeds of discord and controversy were early sown, and could not fail to spring up soon into animosities and dissensions, which accord-

Excommuni-
cation.

Controver-
sies among
Christians.

^r See Morinus, *Comm. de Disciplina Pœnitentiæ*, lib. ix. cap. xix. p. 670.

ingly broke out, and divided the church. The first of these controversies, which was set on foot in the church of Antioch, regarded the necessity of observing the law of Moses, and its issue is mentioned by St. Luke in *The Acts of the Apostles*.^s This controversy was followed by many others, either with the Jews, who were violently attached to the worship of their ancestors, or with the votaries of a wild and fanatical sort of philosophy, or with such as, mistaking the true genius of the Christian religion, abused it monstrously to the encouragement of their vices, and the indulgence of their appetites and passions.^t St. Paul and the other apostles have, in several places of their writings, mentioned these controversies, but with such brevity, that it is difficult, at this distance of time, to come at the true state of the question in these various disputes.

XII. The most weighty and important of all these controversies, was that which certain Jewish doctors raised at Rome, and in other Christian churches, concerning the means of justification and acceptance with God, and the method of salvation pointed out in the word of God. The apostles, wherever they exercised their ministry, had constantly declared all hopes of acceptance and salvation delusive, except such as were founded on Jesus the Redeemer, and his all-sufficient *merits*, while the Jewish doctors maintained the *works* of the law to be the true efficient cause of the soul's eternal salvation and felicity. This latter sentiment not only led to many other errors extremely prejudicial to Christianity, but was also injurious to the glory of the divine Saviour. For those who looked upon a course of life conformable to the law, as a meritorious title to eternal happiness, could not consider Christ as the Son of God, and the Saviour of mankind, but only as an eminent prophet, or a divine messenger, sent from above to enlighten and instruct a darkened world. It is not, therefore, surprising that St. Paul took so much pains in his *Epistle to the Romans*, and in his other writings, to extirpate such a pernicious and capital error.

XIII. The controversy that had been raised concerning the necessity of observing the ceremonies of the Mosaic law, was determined by the apostles in the

Controversy
about the terms
of acceptance
and salvation.

Judaizing
Christians.

^s Chap. xv.

^t See, for an illustration of these points, Witsius's *Miscellanæ Sacra*, tom. ii. *Exercit.* xx. xxi. xxii. p. 668. As also Camp. Vitringa, *Observ. Sacra*, lib. iv. cap. ix. s. xi. p. 952.

wisest and most prudent manner." Their authority, however, respectable as it was, had not its full effect. For the prejudices which the Jews, especially those who lived in Palestine, entertained in favour of the Mosaic law, and their ancient worship were so deeply rooted in their minds, that they could not be thoroughly removed. The force of these prejudices was indeed somewhat diminished after the destruction of Jerusalem, and the ruin of the temple, but not entirely destroyed. And hence, as we shall see in its place, a part of the Judaizing Christians separated themselves from the rest, and formed a particular sect, distinguished by their adherence to the law of Moses

CHAPTER IV.

CONCERNING THE RITES AND CEREMONIES USED IN THE CHURCH DURING THIS CENTURY.

1. **THE** Christian religion was singularly commendable on account of its beautiful and divine simplicity, which appears from the two great and fundamental principles on which it was built, viz. *faith* and *charity*. This simplicity was not, however, incompatible with certain external rights, and positive institutions, which, indeed, are necessary, in this imperfect state, to keep alive a sense of religion in the minds of men. The rites instituted by Christ himself were only two in number, and these designed to continue to the end of the church here below, without any variation. These rites were *baptism* and the *holy supper*, which are not to be considered as mere ceremonies, nor yet as symbolic representations only, but also as ordinances accompanied with a sanctifying influence upon the heart and the affections of true Christians. And we cannot help observing here, that since the divine Saviour thought fit to appoint no more than two plain institutions in his church, this shows us that a number of ceremonies is not essential to his religion, and that he left it to the free and prudent choice of Christians to establish such rites as the circumstances of the times, or the exigencies of the church might require.

Baptism and
the Lord's
supper institu-
ted by Christ.

II. There are several circumstances which incline us to think that the friends and apostles of our blessed Lord, either tolerated through necessity, or appointed for wise reasons, many other external rites in various places. At the same time, we are not to imagine that they ever conferred upon any person a perpetual, indelible, pontifical authority, or that they enjoined the same rites in all churches. We learn, on the contrary, from authentic records, that the Christian worship was, from the beginning, celebrated in a different manner in different places, and that, no doubt, by the orders, or at least with the approbation, of the apostles and their disciples. In these early times it was both wise and necessary, to show, in the establishment of outward forms of worship, some indulgence to the ancient opinions, manners, and laws of the respective nations to whom the gospel was preached.

Rites instituted by the Apostles.

III. From hence it follows, that the opinion of those who maintain that the Jewish rites were adopted *every where*, in the Christian churches, by order of the apostles, or their disciples, is destitute of all foundation. In those Christian societies, which were totally or principally composed of Jewish converts, it was natural to retain as much of the Jewish ritual as the genius of Christianity would suffer, and a multitude of examples testify that this was actually done. But that the same translation of Jewish rites should take place in Christian churches, where there were no Jews, or a very small and inconsiderable number, is utterly incredible, because such an event was morally impossible. In a word, the external forms of worship used in the times of old, must necessarily have been regulated and modified according to the character, genius, and manners of the different nations on which the light of the gospel arose.

The Jewish rites retained in several places.

IV. Since then there was such a variety in the ritual and discipline of the primitive churches, it must be very difficult to give such an account of the worship, manners, and institutions of the ancient Christians, as will agree with what was practised in all those countries where the gospel flourished. There are, notwithstanding, certain laws, whose authority and obligation were universal and indispensable among all Christians, and of these we shall here give a brief account. All Christians were unanimous in setting apart the first day

Public assemblies of Christians.

of the week, on which the triumphant Saviour arose from the dead, for the solemn celebration of public worship. This pious custom, which was derived from the example of the church of Jerusalem, was founded upon the express appointment of the apostles, who consecrated that day to the same sacred purpose, and was observed universally throughout all the Christian churches, as appears from the united testimonies of the most credible writers.^w The seventh day of the week was also observed as a festival,^x not by the Christians in general, but by such churches only as were principally composed of Jewish converts, nor did the other Christians censure this custom as criminal and unlawful. It appears, moreover, that all the Christian churches observed two great anniversary festivals; the one in memory of Christ's glorious resurrection; and the other to commemorate the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the apostles.^y To these we may add the days on which the blessed martyrs laid down their lives for the truth, which days were probably dignified with particular solemnities and marks of veneration from the earliest times.

v. The places in which the first Christians assembled to celebrate divine worship, were, no doubt, the houses of private persons. But in process of time, it became necessary, that these sacred assemblies should be confined to one fixed place, in which the books, tables, and desks, required in divine service, might be constantly kept, and the dangers avoided, which, in those perilous times, attended their transportation from one place to another. And then, probably, the places of meeting, that had formerly belonged to

^w Phil. Jac. Hartmannus, *De rebus gestis Christianorum sub Apostolis*, cap. xv. p. 387. Just. Henn. Bohmer, *Dissert. i. Juris Eccles. Antiqui de stato die Christianor.* p. 20, &c.

^x Steph. Curcellæus, *Diatriba de esu Sanguinis, Operum Theolog.* p. 958. Gab. Albaspinæus, *Observat. Eccles. lib. i. Observ. xiii.* p. 53. It is in vain that many learned men have laboured to prove, that in all the primitive churches, both the first and last day of the week were observed as festivals. The churches of Bithynia, of which Pliny speaks in his letter to Trajan, had only *one stated day*, for the celebration of public worship; and that was undoubtedly the first day of the week, or what we call the *Lord's Day*.

^y There are, it is true, learned men, who look upon it as a doubtful matter, whether or no the day of Pentecost was celebrated as a festival so early as the first century. See Bingham's *Antiquities of the Christian Church*, book xx. ch. vi. p. 120. But notwithstanding this, there are many weighty reasons for believing that festival as ancient as of that of Easter, which was celebrated, as all agree, from the very first rise of the church. It is also probable, that Friday, the day of Christ's crucifixion, was early distinguished by particular honours from the other days of the week. See Jac. Godofred, in *Codicem Theodosii*, tom. i. p. 133. Asseman. *Biblioth. Oriental. Vatican.* tom. i. p. 217, 237. Martene, *Thesaur. Anecd.* tom. v. p. 66.

private persons, became the property of the whole Christian community.^z These few remarks are, in my opinion, sufficient to determine that question, which has been so long and so tediously debated, viz. *whether the first Christians had churches or not?*^a Since if any are pleased to give the name of *church* to a house, or the part of a house, which, though appointed as the place of religious worship, was neither separated from common use, nor considered as holy in the opinion of the people, it will be readily granted that the most ancient Christians had churches.

VI. In these assemblies the holy Scriptures were publicly read, and for that purpose were divided into certain portions or lessons. This part of divine service was followed by a brief exhortation to the people, in which eloquence and art gave place to the natural and fervent expression of zeal and charity. If any declared themselves extraordinarily animated by the Holy Spirit, they were permitted to explain successively the divine will, while the other prophets, who were present, decided how much weight and authority was to be attributed to what they said.^b The prayers, which made a considerable part of the public worship, came in at the conclusion of these discourses, and were repeated by the people after the bishop or presbyter, who presided in the service.^c To these were added certain hymns, which were sung, not by the whole assembly, but by persons appointed for that purpose, during the celebration of the Lord's supper, and the feasts of charity. Such were the essential parts of divine worship, which were observed in all Christian churches, though perhaps the method and order in which they were performed, were not the same in all.^d

The manner of conducting the public worship in these assemblies.

VII. The prayers of the first Christians were followed by *oblations* of bread, wine, and other things; and hence both the ministers of the church, and the poor, derived their subsistence. Every Christian, who was in an opulent condition, and indeed every one, according to their circumstances, brought with them their

The Lord's supper and the feasts of charity.

^z See Camp. Vitringa, *De synagoga vetere*, lib. i. part iii. cap. i. p. 432.

^a See Blondel, *De Episcopis et Presbyteris*, § 3, p. 216, 243, 246, Just. Henn. Bohmer, *Dissert. ii. Juris Eccles. Antiqui. de Antelucanis Christianorum Catibus*, § 4, p. 39. Bingham's *Antiquities of the Christian Church*, book viii. ch. i. § 3, 4, 5, 6.

^b 1 Cor. xiv. 6.

^c See Justin Martyr, his second Apology, p. 98, &c.

^d This must be understood of churches well established, and regulated by fixed and certain laws. For in the first Christian assemblies, which were yet in an imperfect and fluctuating state, one or other of these circumstances of divine worship may possibly have been omitted.

gifts, and offered them, as it were, unto the Lord.^e Of the bread and wine, presented in these offerings, such a quantity was separated from the rest, as was required in the administration of the Lord's supper; this was consecrated by certain prayers pronounced by the bishop alone, to which the people assented by saying *Amen*.^f The holy supper was distributed by the *deacons*; and this sacred institution was followed by sober repasts, which, from the excellent end they were designed to promote, were called *agapæ*, or *feasts of charity*.^g Many attempts have been made to fix precisely the nature of these social feasts. But here it must be again considered, that the rites and customs of the primitive Christians were very different in different countries, and that consequently these feasts, like other institutions, were not every where celebrated in the same manner. This is the true and only way of explaining all the difficulties that can arise upon this subject.

VIII. The sacrament of *baptism* was administered in this century, without the public assemblies, in places appointed and prepared for that purpose, and was performed by immersion of the whole body in the baptismal font.^h At first it was usual for all who laboured in the propagation of the gospel, to be present at that solemn ceremony; and it was customary, that the converts should be baptized and received into the church by those under whose ministry they had embraced the Christian doctrine. But this custom was soon changed. When the Christian churches were well established, and governed by a system of fixed laws, the right of baptizing Christian converts was vested in the bishop alone. This right, indeed, he conferred upon the *presbyters* and *chorepiscopi*, or *country bishops*, when the bounds of the church were still further enlarged, reserving however to himself, the *confirmation* of the baptism, which was administered by a *presbyter*.ⁱ There were,

^e See the dissertations of the venerable and learned Pfaff, *De oblatione et consecratione Eucharistica*, which are contained in his *Synagma Dissertation. Theologicæ*, published at Stutgard, in 8vo. in the year 1720.

^f Justin Martyr *Apologia secunda*, p. 98. The several authors who have written concerning the manner of celebrating the Lord's supper, are mentioned by Jo. Alb. Fabricius, in his *Bibliograph. Antiquar.* cap. xi. p. 395, &c.

^g The authors who have written concerning the *Agapæ*, or *feasts of charity*, are mentioned by Ittigius, in his *Selecta Historiæ Eccles. Capita*, sæc. ii. cap. iii. p. 180, and also by Pfaff, *De Originibus Juris Eccles.* p. 68.

^h See the learned dissertation of Jo. Gerard Vossius concerning baptism, *Disp. i. Thes. vi.* p. 31, &c. The reader will also find in the xith chapter and xxvth section of the *Bibliogr. Antiquar.* of the celebrated Fabricius, an account of the authors who have written upon this subject.

ⁱ These observations will illustrate and perhaps decide the question concerning the

doubtless, several circumstantial rites and ceremonies observed in the administration of this sacrament, for the sake of order and decency. Of these, however, it is not easy, nor perhaps possible, to give a certain or satisfactory account; since, upon this subject, we are too much exposed to the illusion, which arises from confounding the customs of the primitive times with those of succeeding ages.

ix. Those who were visited with violent or dangerous disorders, sent, according to the apostle's direction,^k for the rulers of the church, and, after confessing their sins, were recommended by them to the divine mercy in prayers full of piety and fervour; and were also anointed with oil. This rite has occasioned many debates, and indeed they must be endless, since the silence of the ancient writers upon that head renders it impossible to decide the matter with any degree of certainty. The anointing the sick is very rarely mentioned in the ancient records of the church, though there is no reason to doubt of its having been a universal custom among Christians.^l

The sick
anointed.

x. Neither Christ nor his apostles enacted any law concerning *fasting*. A custom, however, prevailed among many Christians of joining abstinence with their prayers, especially when they were engaged in affairs of extraordinary moment and importance.^m As this custom was authorized by no public law, the time that was to be employed in these acts of abstinence was left to every one's private judgment, nor were those looked upon as criminal, who contented themselves with observing the rules of a strict temperance, without going any further.ⁿ In the most ancient times we find no mention of any public and solemn fasts, except upon the anniversary of Christ's crucifixion. But, in process of time, days of fasting were introduced, first by custom, and afterward by positive appointment; though it is not certain what those days were, nor whether they were observed in the first century. Those notwithstanding, who affirm that, in the time of the

Fasting in-
troduced.

right of administering baptism, which had been so long debated among the learned, and with such ardour and vehemence See Bohmer, *Dissert. xi. Juris Eccles.* p. 500; also Le Clerc *Biblioth. Universelle et Historique*, tom. iv. p. 93.

^k James v. 14.

^l The accounts which the ancient authors have given of this custom, are, the most of them, collected in a treatise published by Launoius, *De sacramentis unctionis infirmorum*, cap. i. p. 444, in the first volume of his works. Among these accounts there are very few drawn from the writers of the first ages, and some passages applicable to this subject, have been omitted by that learned author.

^m 1 Cor. vii. 5.

ⁿ See the *Shepherd of Hermas*, book iii. *Similitud.* v. p. 931, 935, edit. of Fabricius.

apostles, or soon after, the fourth and sixth days of the week were observed as fasts, are not, it must be acknowledged, destitute of specious arguments in favour of their opinion.^o

CHAPTER V.

CONCERNING THE DIVISIONS AND HERESIES WHICH TROUBLED THE CHURCH DURING THIS CENTURY.

I. THE Christian church was scarcely formed, when, in different places, there started up certain pretended reformers, who, not satisfied with the simplicity of that religion which was taught by the apostles, meditated changes of doctrine and worship, and set up a new religion drawn from their own licentious imaginations. This we learn from the writings of the apostles, particularly from the epistles of St. Paul, where we find that some were for forcing the doctrines of Christianity into a conformity with the philosophical systems they had adopted,^p while others were as studious to blend with these doctrines the opinions, customs, and traditions of the Jews. Several of these are mentioned by the apostles, such as Hymenæus, Alexander, Philetus, Hermogenes, Demas, and Diotrephes; though the four last are rather to be considered as apostates from the truth, than as corrupters of it.^q

II. The influence of these new teachers was but inconsiderable at first. During the lives of the apostles, their attempts toward the perversion of Christianity were attended with little success, and the number of their followers was exceeding small. They, however, acquired credit and strength by degrees; and even from the first dawn of the gospel, laid, imperceptibly, the foundations of those sects, whose animosities and disputes produced afterward such trouble and perplexity in the Christian church. The true state of these divisions is more involved in darkness than any other part of ecclesiastical history; and this obscurity proceeds partly from the want of ancient records,

^o See Beverege's *Vindication of the Canon*, in the second volume of his edition of the *Apostolic Fathers*, p. 166.

^p 1 Tim. vi. 20. 1 Tim. i. 3, 4. Tit. iii. 9. Col. ii. 8.

^q 2 Tim. ii. 18, and in other places. See also the accurate accounts given of these men by Vitrिंगa, *Observ. Sacr.* lib. iv. cap. ix. p. 952. Ittigius, *De hæresiarchis ævæ Apostol.* § i. cap. viii. p. 84. Buddeus, *De Ecclesia Apostolica*, cap. v. p. 292, &c.

partly from the abstruse and unintelligible nature of the doctrines that distinguished these various sects; and finally, from the ignorance and prejudices of those who have transmitted to us the accounts of them which are yet extant. Of one thing indeed we are certain, and that is, that the most of these doctrines were chimerical and extravagant in the highest degree; and so far from containing any thing that could recommend them to a lover of truth, that they rather deserve to occupy a place in the history of human delusion and folly.^r

III. Among the various sects that troubled the tranquillity of the Christian church, the leading one was that of the gnostics. These enthusiastic and self-sufficient philosophers boasted of their being able to restore mankind to the *knowledge, gnosis*, of the true and Supreme Being, which had been lost in the world. They also foretold the approaching defeat of the *evil principle*, to whom they attributed the creation of this globe, and declared in the most pompous terms, the destruction of his associates and the ruin of his empire. An opinion has prevailed, derived from the authority of Clemens the Alexandrian, that the first rise of the gnostic sect is to be dated after the death of the apostles, and placed under the reign of the emperor Adrian; and it is also alleged that, before this time, the church enjoyed a perfect tranquillity, undisturbed by dissensions or sects of any kind. But the smallest degree of attention to the language of the holy Scriptures, not to mention the authority of other ancient records, will prevent our adopting this groundless notion. For, from several passages of the sacred writings,^s it evidently appears that even in the first century, the general meeting of Christians was deserted, and separate assemblies formed in several places by persons infected with the gnostic heresy; though, at the same time, it must be acknowledged, that this per-

The sect of
the gnostics,

^r Certain authors have written professedly concerning the sects that divided the church in this and the following century, such as Ittigius in his treatise, *De hæresiarum ævi Apostolici et Apostolico proximi*, printed at Leipsic in 1690, and also in the appendix to the same work, published in 1696. Renatus Massuet. in his *Dissertations* prefixed to Irenæus, and Tillemont, in his *Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire de l'Eglise*. But these authors, and others whom we shall not mention, have rather collected the materials, from which a history of the ancient sects may be composed, than written their history. Hinckelman, Thomasius, Dodwell, Horbius, and Basnage, have some of them promised, others of them attempted, such a history; but none of them have finished this useful design. It is therefore to be wished, that some eminent writer, who, with a competent knowledge of ancient philosophy and literature is also possessed of a penetrating and unbiassed judgment, would undertake this difficult, but interesting work.

^s 1 John ii. 18. 1 Tim. vi. 20. Col. ii. 8.

nicious sect was not conspicuous, either for its number or its reputation, before the time of Adrian. It is proper just to observe here, that under the general appellation of gnostics are comprehended all those who, in the first ages of Christianity, corrupted the doctrine of the gospel by a profane mixture of the tenets of the oriental philosophy, concerning the origin of evil and the creation of the world, with its divine truths.

iv. It was from this oriental philosophy, of which the leading principles have been already mentioned, that the Christian gnostics derived their origin. sprung from the oriental philosophy; If it was one of the chief tenets of this philosophy, that rational souls were imprisoned in corrupt matter, contrary to the will of the Supreme Deity; there were, however, in this same system, other doctrines which promised a deliverance from this deplorable state of servitude and darkness. The oriental sages expected the arrival of an extraordinary messenger of the Most High upon earth; a messenger invested with a divine authority, endowed with the most eminent sanctity and wisdom, and peculiarly appointed to enlighten, with the knowledge of the Supreme Being, the darkened minds of miserable mortals, and to deliver them from the chains of the tyrants and usurpers of this world. When, therefore, some of these philosophers perceived that Christ and his followers wrought miracles of the most amazing kind, and also of the most salutary nature to mankind, they were easily induced to believe that he was the great messenger expected from above, to deliver men from the power of the malignant *genii*, or spirits, to which, according to their doctrine, the world was subjected, and to free their souls from the dominion of corrupt matter. This supposition once admitted, they interpreted, or rather corrupted, all the precepts and doctrines of Christ and his apostles, in such a manner, as to reconcile them with their own pernicious tenets.

v. From the false principle above mentioned arose, as it was but natural to expect, a multitude of sentiments and notions most remote from the tenor of the gospel doctrines, and the nature of its precepts. occasions many pernicious errors concerning the Scriptures and other matters. The gnostic doctrine, concerning the creation of the world by one or more inferior beings of an evil, or at least of an imperfect nature, led that sect to deny the divine authority of the books of the Old Testa-

ment, whose accounts of the origin of things so palpably contradicted this idle fiction. Through a frantic aversion to these sacred books, they lavished their encomiums upon the *serpent*, the first author of sin, and held in veneration some of the most impious and profligate persons, of whom mention is made in sacred history. The pernicious influence of their fundamental principle carried them to all sorts of extravagance, filled them with an abhorrence of Moses and the religion he taught, and made them assert that, in imposing such a system of disagreeable and severe laws upon the Jews, he was only actuated by the malignant author of this world, who consulted his own glory and authority, and not the real advantage of men. Their persuasion that *evil* resided in *matter*, as its centre and source, prevented their treating the body with that regard that is due to it, rendered them unfavourable to wedlock, as the means by which corporeal beings are multiplied, and led them to reject the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, and its future reunion with the immortal spirit. Their notion, that malevolent *genii* presided in nature, and that from them proceeded all diseases and calamities, wars and desolations, induced them to apply themselves to the study of magic, to weaken the powers, or suspend the influences of these malignant agents. I omit the mention of several other extravagances in their system, the enumeration of which would be incompatible with the character of a compendious history.

VI. The notions of this sect concerning Jesus Christ were impious and extravagant. For, though they considered him as the Son of the Supreme God sent from the *pleroma*, or habitation of the Everlasting Father, for the happiness of miserable mortals; yet they entertained unworthy ideas both of his person and offices. They denied his deity, looking upon him as the Son of God, and consequently inferior to the Father; and they rejected his humanity, upon the supposition that every thing concrete and corporeal is in itself essentially and intrinsically evil. From hence the greatest part of the gnostics denied that Christ was clothed with a *real* body, or that he suffered *really*, for the sake of mankind, the pains and sorrows which he is said to have sustained, in the sacred history. They maintained that he came to mortals with no other view, than to deprive the tyrants of this world of their influence upon virtuous and heaven-

Their opinions concerning Christ.

born souls, and, destroying the empire of these wicked spirits, to teach mankind how they might separate the divine mind from the impure body, and render the former worthy of being united to the Father of Spirits.

VII. Their doctrine relating to morals and practice was of two kinds, and those extremely different from each other. The greatest part of this sect adopted rules of life that were full of austerity, recommended a strict and rigorous abstinence, and prescribed the most severe bodily mortifications, from a notion that they had a happy influence in purifying and enlarging the mind, and in disposing it for the contemplation of celestial things. As they looked upon it to be the unhappiness of the soul to have been associated, at all, to a malignant, terrestrial body; so they imagined, that the more that body was extenuated, the less it would corrupt and degrade the mind, or divert it from pursuits of a spiritual and divine nature; all the gnostics, however, were not so severe in their moral discipline. Some maintained that there was no moral difference in human actions; and thus, confounding right with wrong, they gave a loose rein to all the passions, and asserted the innocence of following blindly all their motions, and of living by their tumultuous dictates. There is nothing surprising or unaccountable in this difference between the gnostic moralists. For, when we examine the matter with attention, we shall find that the same doctrine may very naturally have given rise to these opposite sentiments. As they all in general considered the body as the centre and source of evil, those of that sect, who were of a morose and austere disposition, would be hence naturally led to mortify and combat the body as the enemy of the soul; and those who were of a voluptuous turn, might also consider the actions of the body, as having no relation, either of congruity, or incongruity, to the state of a soul in communion with God.

VIII. Such extraordinary doctrines had certainly need of an undoubted authority to support them; and as this authority was not to be found in the writings of the evangelists or apostles, recourse was had to fables and stratagems. When the gnostics were challenged to produce the sources from whence they had drawn such strange tenets, and an authority proper to justify the

Their moral
doctrines.

How their
doctrines
were sup-
ported.

* See Clemens Alexandrinus, *Stromatum*, lib. iii. cap. v. p. 529, edit. Potter.

confidence with which they taught them; some referred to fictitious writings of Abraham, Zoroaster, Christ, and his apostles; others boasted of their having drawn these opinions from certain secret doctrines of Christ, which were not exposed to vulgar eyes; others affirmed, that they had arrived at these sublime degrees of wisdom by an innate force and vigour of mind; and others asserted, that they were instructed in these mysterious parts of theological science by Theudas, a disciple of St. Paul, and by Matthias, one of the friends of our Lord. As to those among the gnostics, who did not utterly reject the books of the New Testament, it is proper to observe, that they not only interpreted those sacred books most absurdly, by neglecting the true spirit of the words and the intention of the writers, but also corrupted them, in the most perfidious manner, by curtailings and additions, in order to remove what was unfavourable, or to produce something conformable to their pernicious and extravagant system.

ix. It has been already observed, that the gnostics were divided in their opinions before they embraced Christianity. This appears from the account Whence the dissensions among this sect. which has been given above of the oriental philosophy; and from hence we may see the reason, why they were formed into so many different sects after their receiving the Christian faith. For, as every one endeavoured to force the doctrines of the gospel into a conformity with their particular sentiments and tenets, so Christianity must have appeared in different forms, among the different members of a sect, which passed, however, under one general name. Another circumstance which also contributed to the diversity of sects among this people was, that some being Jews by birth, as Cerinthus and others, could not so easily assume that contempt of Moses, and that aversion to his history, which were so virulently indulged by those who had no attachment to the Jewish nation, nor to its religious institutions. We observe, in the last place, that the whole religious and philosophical system of the gnostics was destitute of any sure or solid foundation, and depended, both for its existence and support, upon the airy suggestions of genius and fancy. This consideration alone is a sufficient key to explain the divisions that reigned in this sect; since *uniformity* can never subsist, with assurance, but upon the basis of evident and substantial truth; and *variety* must naturally introduce it-

self into those systems and institutions which are formed and conducted by the sole powers of invention and fancy.

x. As then the Christian religion was, in its first rise, corrupted in several places by the mixture of an
Dositheus. impious and chimerical philosophy, with its pure and sublime doctrines, it will be proper to mention here the heads of those sects, who, in the first century, cast a cloud upon the lustre of the rising church. Among these many gave the first place to Dositheus, a Samaritan. It is certain, that about the time of our Saviour, a man, so named, lived among the Samaritans, and abandoned that sect; but all the accounts we have of him tend to show, that he is improperly placed among those called *heretics*, and should rather be ranked among the enemies of Christianity. For this delirious man set himself up for the Messiah, whom God had promised to the Jews, and disowning, of consequence, the divine mission of Christ, could not be said to corrupt his doctrine."

xi. The same observation holds true with respect to Simon Magus. This impious man is not to be
Simon Magus not properly a heretic. ranked among those, who corrupted with their errors the purity and simplicity of the Christian doctrine: nor is he to be considered as the parent and chief of the heretical tribe, in which point of light he has been injudiciously viewed by almost all ancient and modern writers. He is rather to be placed in the number of those who were enemies to the progress and advancement of Christianity. For it is manifest from all the records we have concerning him, that, after his defection from the Christians, he retained not the least attachment to Christ, but opposed himself openly to the divine Saviour, and assumed to himself blasphemously the title of the *supreme power of God*.^w

xii. The accounts, which ancient writers give us of Simon the magician, and of his opinions, seem so
His history different, and indeed so inconsistent with each other, that certain learned men have considered them as regarding two different persons, bearing the name of Simon; the one a magician, and an apostate from Christianity; the other a gnostic philosopher. This opinion, which supposes a fact, without any other proof than a seeming

^u See Basnage, *Histoire des Juifs*, lib. ii. cap. xiii. Rich. Simon, *Critique de la Bibliothèque des Auteurs Ecclesiastiques de Du Pin*, tom. iii. cap. xiii. p. 304.

^w *Origén adv. Celsum*, lib. v. p. 272, edit. Spencersi

difference in the narration of the ancient historians, ought not to be too lightly adopted. To depart from the authority of ancient writers in this matter is by no means prudent; nor is it necessary to reconcile the different accounts already mentioned, whose inconsistency is not real, but apparent only. Simon was, by birth, a Samaritan, or a Jew; when he had studied philosophy at Alexandria,^x he made a public profession of magic, which was nothing very uncommon at that time, and persuaded the Samaritans, by fictitious miracles, that he had received from God the power of commanding and restraining those evil beings by which mankind were tormented.^y Having seen the miracles which Philip wrought, by a divine power, he joined himself to this apostle, and embraced the doctrine of Christ, but with no other design than to receive the power of working miracles, in order to promote a low interest, and to preserve and increase his impious authority over the minds of men. Then St. Peter pointed out to him solemnly the impiety of his intentions, and the vanity of his hopes, in that severe discourse recorded in the viiith chapter of the *Acts of the Apostles*; then the vile impostor not only returned to his former ways by an entire defection from the Christians, but also opposed, wherever he came, the progress of the gospel, and even travelled into different countries with that odious design. Many things are recorded of this impostor, of his tragical end, and of the statue erected to him at Rome, which the greatest part of the learned reject as fabulous. They are at least uncertain, and destitute of all probability.^z

xiii. It is beyond all doubt, that Simon was in the class of those philosophers, who not only maintained the eternity of *matter*, but also the existence of an *evil being*, who presided and thus shared the empire of the universe, with the supreme and beneficent *Mind*. and doctrines.

^x *Clementina Homil.* ii. p. 633, tom. ii. *PP. Apost.*

^y *Acts* viii. 9, 10.

^z See Beausobre, *Histoire des Manich.* p. 203, 395. Van Dale's dissertation, *De Statua Simonis*, subjoined to his discourse concerning the ancient oracles. Dellin-
gius, *Observat. Sacr.* lib. i. *Observ.* xxxvi. p. 140. Tillemont, *Memoires pour servir a
l'Histoire de l'Eglise*, tom. i. p. 340. [The circumstances of Simon's tragical end,
viz. his having pretended to fly, by a miraculous power, in order to please the em-
peror Nero, who was fond of magic; his falling to the ground, and breaking his
limbs in consequence of the prayers of St. Peter and St. Paul; and his put-
ting himself to death, through shame and despair, to have been thus defeated by the
power of the apostles; all these romantic fictions have derived their credit from
a set of ecclesiastical writers, who, on many occasions, prefer the marvelous to the
truth, as favourable to a system of religion, or rather superstition, which truth and
reason loudly disown.]

And as there was a good deal of variety in the sentiments of the different members of this sect, it is more than probable that Simon embraced the opinion of those who held that matter moved from eternity by an intrinsic and necessary activity, had, by its innate force produced at a certain period of time, from its own substance, the *evil principle* which now exercises dominion over it, with all his numerous train of attendants. From this pernicious doctrine, the other errors attributed to him concerning *fate, the indifference of human actions, the impurity of the human body, the power of magic*, and such like extravagances, flow naturally as from their true and genuine source.^a But this odious magician still proceeded to more shocking degrees of enormity in his monstrous fictions; for he pretended, that in his person resided the greatest and most powerful of the divine *æons*; that another *æon* of the female sex, the mother of all human souls, dwelt in the person of his mistress Helena,^b and that he came, by the command of God, upon earth, to abolish the empire of those that had formed this material world, and to deliver Helena from their power and dominion.

xiv. Another wrong headed teacher named Menander, a Samaritan also by birth, appeared in this century. He is said to have been instructed by Simon; though this opinion has no other foundation, than the general notion, that all the various sects of the gnostics derived their origin from that magician; and this notion is entirely groundless. Be that as it will, Menander should rather be ranked with the lunatics than with the heretics of antiquity, seeing he also took it into his head to exhibit himself to the world as the promised Saviour. For it appears, by the testimonies of Irenæus, Justin, and Tertullian, that he pretended to be one of the *æons* sent from the *pleroma*, or celestial regions, to succour the souls that lay

^a The dissertation of Horbius, concerning Simon the magician, which was published not long ago, in the *Biblioth. Hæresiologicala* of Voigtius, tom. i. part iii. p. 511, seems preferable to any thing else upon that subject, though it be a juvenile performance, and not sufficiently finished. He follows the steps of his master Thomasius, who, with admirable penetration, discovered the true source of that multitude of errors, with which the gnostics, and particularly Simon, were so dismally polluted. Voigtius, in the place above cited, p. 567, gives a list of the other authors who have made any mention of this impostor.

^b *app* very learned men have given an allegorical explication of what the ancient writers say concerning Helena, the mistress of this magician, and imagine that by the Helena is signified either *matter*, or *spirit*. But nothing is more easy than to flow upon what slight foundations this opinion is built.

groaning under bodily oppression and servitude, and to maintain them against the violence and stratagems of the *demons* that hold the reins of empire in this sublunary world. As this doctrine was built upon the same foundation with that of Simon Magus, therefore the ancient writers looked upon him as the instructor of Menander.

xv. If then we separate these three persons, now successively mentioned, from the heretics of the first century, we may rank among the chief of the Nicola-
itans. Christian sectaries, and particularly of those that bear the general name of gnostics, the Nicolaitans, whom Christ himself mentions with abhorrence, by the mouth of his apostle.^c It is true, indeed, that the divine Saviour does not reproach them with erroneous opinions concerning the deity, but with the licentiousness of their practice, and the contempt of that solemn law which the apostles had enacted, Acts, xv. 29, against fornication, and the use of *meats* offered to idols. It is, however, certain, that the writers of the second and the following centuries, Irenæus, Tertullian, Clemens, and others, affirm, that the Nicolaitans adopted the sentiments of the gnostics, concerning the *two principles* of all things, the *æons*, and the origin of this terrestrial globe. The authority of these writers would be entirely satisfactory in this matter, were there not some reason to imagine, that they confounded, in their narrations, two sects very different from each other; that of the Nicolaitans, mentioned in the Revelations; and another founded by a certain Nicolaus, in the second century, upon the principles of the gnostics. But this is a matter of too doubtful a nature to justify a positive decision on either side.

xvi. There is no sort of doubt, but that Cerinthus may be placed with propriety among the gnostics, though the learned are not entirely agreed whether he belongs to the heretics of the first or the second Cerinthus
and the Ce-
rinthians. century.^d This man was by birth a Jew, and having applied himself to letters and philosophy at Alexandria,^e attempted at length to form a new and singular system of doctrine and discipline by a monstrous combination of the doctrines of Christ, with the opinions and errors of the Jews and gnostics. From the latter he borrowed their

^c Rev. ii. 6, 14, 15.

^d See Sam. Basnage, *Annal. Polit. Eccles.* tom. ii. p. 6. Faydit, *Eclaircissements sur l'Histoire Eccles. des deux premiers Siècles*, cap. v. p. 64. The opinion of these two learned men is opposed by Buddæus, *De Eccles. Apostolica*, cap. v. p. 412.

^e Theodoret. *Fabul. Heret.* lib. iii. cap. ii. p. 219, tom. iii. opp.

pleroma, their *æons*, their *demiurge*, &c. and so modified and tempered these fictions, as to give them an air of Judaism, which must have considerably favoured the progress of his heresy. He taught “that the creator of this world, whom he considered also as the sovereign and lawgiver of the Jewish people, was a *being* endowed with the greatest virtues, and derived his birth from the *Supreme God*; that this *being* fell, by degrees, from his native virtue, and his primitive dignity; that the *Supreme God*, in consequence of this, determined to destroy his empire, and sent upon earth, for this purpose, one of the ever happy and glorious *æons*, whose name was Christ; that this Christ chose for his habitation the person of Jesus, a man of the most illustrious sanctity and justice, the son of Joseph and Mary, and descending in the form of a *dove*, entered into him while he was receiving the baptism of John in the waters of Jordan; that Jesus, after his union with Christ, opposed himself with vigour to the *God of the Jews*, and was, by his instigation, seized and crucified by the Hebrew chiefs; that when Jesus was taken captive, Christ ascended up on high, so that the man Jesus alone was subjected to the pains of an ignominious death.” Cerinthus required of his followers, that they should worship the father of Christ, even the Supreme God, in conjunction with the Son; that they should abandon the lawgiver of the Jews; whom he looked upon as the creator of the world; that they should retain a part of the law given by Moses, but should, nevertheless, employ their principal attention and care to regulate their lives by the precepts of Christ. To encourage them to this, he promised them the resurrection of this mortal body, after which was to commence a scene of the most exquisite delights, during Christ’s earthly reign of a thousand years, which was to be succeeded by a happy and never ending life in the celestial world. For Cerinthus held, that Christ will one day return upon earth, and, renewing his former union with the man Jesus, will reign with his people in the land of Palestine during a thousand years.

XVII. It has been already observed, that the church was troubled with early disputes concerning the law of Moses, and the Jewish rites. Those, however, who considered the observance of the Mosaic rites as necessary to salvation, had not, in this first century, proceeded so far as to break off all commu-

The Nazarenes and Ebionites properly belong to the second century.

nion with such as differed from them in this matter. Therefore they were still regarded as brethren, though of the weaker sort. But when, after the second destruction of Jerusalem, under the emperor Adrian, these zealots for the Jewish rites deserted the ordinary assemblies of Christians, and established separate meetings among themselves, then they were numbered with those sects who had departed from the pure doctrine of Christ. Hence the name Nazarenes and Ebionites, by which the judaizing Christians were distinguished from those who looked upon the Mosaic worship and ceremonies as entirely abolished by the appearance of Christ upon earth. We shall only observe further under this head, that though the Nazarenes and Ebionites are generally placed among the sects of the apostolic age, yet they really belong to the second century, which was the earliest period of their existence as a sect.



THE SECOND CENTURY.

PART I.

EXTERNAL HISTORY OF THE CHURCH.

CHAPTER I.

CONCERNING THE PROSPEROUS EVENTS THAT HAPPENED TO THE CHURCH
DURING THIS CENTURY.

I. IN this century the Roman sceptre was, for the most part, swayed by princes of a mild and moderate turn. Trajan, though too eagerly bent upon the The state of the republic pursuit of glory, and not always sufficiently attentive to his conduct, nor prudent in his measures, was nevertheless endowed with many virtues, and the predominant lines of his character were clemency and benevolence. Adrian was of a more harsh and untractable temper; yet very far from deserving the reputation of a wicked or unjust prince. He was of a mixed character, chargeable with several vices, and estimable on account of many excellent qualities. The Antonines were illustrious models of humanity, goodness, and sublime virtue. Severus himself, in whose character and disposition such an unexpected and disadvantageous change was effected, was, in the beginning of his reign, unjust toward none, and even the Christians were treated by him with equity and mildness.

II. This lenity of the emperors was singularly advantageous to those Christians who lived under the Roman sceptre; it suspended sometimes their sufferings, and alleviated the burden of their distresses. The progress of Christianity in the Roman empire.

For, though edicts of a severe nature were issued out against them, and the magistrates, animated by the priests and by the multitude, shed their blood with a cruelty which frequently exceeded even the dictates of the most barbarous laws, yet there was always some remedy that accompanied these evils, and softened their severity. Trajan, however condemnable in other respects, on account of his conduct toward the Christians, was yet engaged, by the representations that Pliny the younger gave of them, to forbid all *search to be made after them*. He also pro-

hibited all anonymous libels and accusations, by which the Christians had so often been perfidiously exposed to the greatest sufferings.^a Antoninus Pius went so far as to enact penal laws against their accusers.^b And others, by various acts of beneficence and compassion, defended them from the injurious treatment of the priests and people. Hence it came to pass, that, in this century, the limits of the church were considerably enlarged, and the number of converts to Christianity prodigiously augmented. Of the truth of this, we have the most respectable and authentic testimonies, in the writings of the ancients; testimonies, whose evidence and authority are every way superior to the vain attempts which some have made to obscure and weaken them.^c

III. It is not easy to point out particularly the different countries on which the light of celestial truth first rose in this age. The ancient records that yet remain, do not give us information sufficient to determine that matter with certainty; nor is it, indeed, a matter of much importance. We are, however, assured by the most unexceptionable testimonies, that Christ was worshipped as God, almost throughout the whole east, as also among the Germans, Spaniards, Celts, Britons, and many other nations;^d but which of them received the gospel in the first century, and which in the second, is a question unanswerable at this distance of time. Pantæus, the head of the Alexandrian school, is said to have conveyed to the Indians the knowledge of Christ.^e But after an attentive examination of the account which Eusebius gives of this matter, it will appear, that these Indians were certain Jews, inhabitants of the Happy Arabia, whom Bartholomew the apostle had before instructed in the doctrines of Christianity. For according to the account of St. Jerome, Pantæus found among this people the gospel of St. Matthew, which they had received from Bartholomew their first teacher.

IV. The Christian religion, having penetrated among the

^a See Pliny's epistles, book x. let. xcviii.

^b Eusebius *Eccles. Hist.* lib. iv. cap. xiii. p. 126.

^c See Moyle's letters concerning the thundering legion, with the remarks which Dr. Mosheim has annexed to his Latin translation of them, published at the end of a work, entitled, *Synagma Dissert. ad Sanctiores Disciplinas pertinent.* See also the dialogue between Justin Martyr and Trypho the Jew, p. 341.

^d Irenæus *contr. Hæres.* lib. i. cap. x. Tertullian *adv. Judæos*, cap. vii. p. 212.

^e Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.* book v. c. x. Jerome *Catal. Scriptor. Eccles.* c. xxvii.

Gauls, seems to have passed from thence into that part of Germany which was subject to the Romans, and from thence into Britain.^f Certain German churches, indeed, are fondly ambitious of deriving their origin from St. Peter, and from the companions of the other apostles. The Britons also are willing to believe, upon the authority of Bede, that in this century, and under the reign of Marcus Antoninus, their king Lucius addressed himself to Eleutherus the Roman pontiff, for doctors to instruct him in the Christian religion, and having obtained his request, embraced the gospel.^g But after all, these traditions are extremely doubtful, and are, indeed, rejected by such as have learning sufficient to weigh the credibility of ancient narrations.

The conversion of the Germans.

v. It is very possible that the light of Christianity may have reached Transalpine Gaul, now called France, before the conclusion of the apostolic age, either by the ministry of the apostles themselves, or their immediate successors. But we have no records that mention with certainty the establishment of Christian churches in this part of Europe before the second century. Pothinus, a man of exemplary piety and zeal, set out from Asia in company with Irenæus and others, and laboured in the Christian cause with such success among the Gauls, that churches were established at Lyons and Vienne, of which Pothinus himself was the first bishop.^h

Conversion of the Gauls.

vi. The writers of this century attribute this rapid progress of Christianity to the power of God, to the energy of divine truth, to the extraordinary gifts, which were imparted to the first Christians, and the miracles and prodigies that were wrought in their behalf, and at their command; nor do they ascribe almost any part of the amazing success that attended the preaching of the gospel, to the intervening succours of human

Translations of the New Testament.

^f Ursinus, Bebelius, and others, have written learnedly concerning the origin of the German churches, which Tertullian and Irenæus mention as erected in this century. Add to these, the ample illustrations of this subject, which are to be found in Liron's *Singularités Histor. et Littér.* tom. iv. p. 193. The celebrated Dom. Calmet has judiciously refuted the common and popular accounts of the first Christian doctors in Germany, in his *Hist. de la Lorraine*, tom. i. *Diss. sur les Eveques de Treves.* part iii. iv. See also Bollandus, *Act. Sanctor.* p. 922. Hontheim *Diss. de Æra Episcop. Trevir.* tom. i. *Hist. Trevir.*

^g See Usher *Antiq. Eccles. Britann.* cap. i. p. 7; as also Godwin, *De conversione Britann.* cap. i. p. 7, and Rapin's *History of England*.

^h See the epistle of Petrus de Marca, concerning the first rise of Christianity in France, published among the dissertations of that author; and also by Valesius, in his edition of Eusebius's *Ecclesiastical History*. See also *Histoire Littéraire de la France*, tom. i. p. 223. Liron's *Singularités Histor. et Littéraires*, vol. iv.

means or second causes. But this is carrying the matter too far. The wisdom of human counsels, and the useful efforts of learning and prudence, are too inconsiderately excluded from this account of things. For it is beyond all doubt, that the pious diligence and zeal, with which many learned and worthy men recommended the sacred writings, and spread them abroad in translations, which rendered them useful to those who were ignorant of the language in which they were written, contributed much to the success and propagation of the Christian doctrine. Latin versions of these sacred books were multiplied by the pious labours of the learned with particular diligence, because that language was now more universal than any other.ⁱ Among these versions, that which was distinguished by the name of the Italic, obtained universally the preference, and was followed by the Syriac, Egyptian, and Ethiopic versions, whose dates it is impossible to fix with certainty.^k

VII. Among the obstacles that retarded the progress of Christianity, the impious calumnies of its enemies were the most considerable. The persons, the characters, and religious sentiments of the first Christians were most unjustly treated, and most perfidiously misrepresented to the credulous multitude, who were restrained by this only from embracing the gospel. Those therefore, who by their *apologetic* writings in favour of the Christians destroyed the poisonous influence of detraction, rendered, no doubt, signal service to the doctrine of Christ, by removing the chief impediment that retarded its progress. Nor were the writings of such as combated with success the ancient heretics without their use, especially in the early periods of the church. For the insipid and extravagant doctrines of these sectaries, and the gross immoralities with which they were chargeable, were extremely prejudicial to the Christian religion, by disgusting

Christians
defended and
heretics refused.

ⁱ See Augustin. *De doctrina Christiana*, lib. ii. cap. xi. p. 85, edit. Calixt.

^k See Jo. Gottlob. Carpzov. *Critica sacra. Vet. Test.* p. 673.

¶ Nothing more injurious can be conceived than the terms of contempt, indignation, and reproach, which the heathens employed in expressing their hatred against the Christians, who were called by them *atheists*, because they derided the heathen polytheism; *magicians*, because they wrought miracles; *self-murderers*, because they suffered martyrdom cheerfully for the truth; *haters of the light*, because, to avoid the fury of the persecutions raised against them, they were forced, at first, to hold their religious assemblies in the night; with a multitude of other ignominious epithets employed against them by Tacitus, Suetonius, Celsus, &c. See Bingham's *Antiquities of the Christian Church*, book i. cap. ii. p. 5.

many at whatever carried the Christian name. But when it was known, by the writings of those who defended Christianity, that these corrupt heretics were held in aversion, instead of being patronized by the true followers of Christ, then the clouds that were cast over the religion of Jesus were dispersed, and the prejudices that had been raised against it were fully removed.

VIII. It is easier to conceive than to express, how much the *miraculous powers* and *extraordinary gifts* which were displayed in the ministry of the first heralds of the gospel, contributed to enlarge the bounds of the church. These gifts, however, which were given for wise and important reasons, began gradually to diminish in proportion as the reasons ceased for which they were conferred. And, accordingly, when almost all nations were enlightened with the truth, and the number of Christian churches increased daily in all places, then the miraculous gift of tongues began gradually to decrease. It appears, at the same time, from unexceptionable testimonies, that the other extraordinary gifts with which the omnipotence and wisdom of the Most High had so richly endowed the rising church, were in several places continued during this century.^m

Miracles and extraordinary gifts.

IX. We cannot indeed place, with any degree of certainty, among the effects of a miraculous power yet remaining in the church, the story of the *Christian legion*, who by their prayers drew from heaven a refreshing shower upon the army of Marcus Antoninus, ready to perish with thirst, when that emperor was at war with the Marcomanni. This remarkable event, which gave to the Christians, to whom it was attributed, the name of the *thundering legion*, on account of the thunder and lightning that destroyed the enemy, while the shower revived the fainting Romans, has been mentioned by many writers. But whether it was really miraculous or not, has been much disputed among learned men. Some think that the Christians, by a pious sort of mistake, attributed this unexpected and seasonable shower, which saved the Roman army, to a miraculous interposition; and this opinion is indeed supported by the weightiest reasons, as well as by the most respectable authorities.ⁿ

The miracle of the thundering legion.

^m Pfanner, *De donis miraculis*. Spencer, *Not. ad Orig. contra Celsum*, p. 5, 6. Mammachius, *Originum et Antiquitat. Christianar.* tom. i. p. 363, &c.

ⁿ Such readers as are desirous to know what learned men have alleged on both sides of this curious question, may consult Witsius's *Dissertat. de Legione Fulminatrice*,

x. Let us distinguish what is doubtful in this story, from ^{More than} that which is certain. It is certain, that the Ro-
^{clabious.} man army, enclosed by the enemy, and reduced to the most deplorable and even desperate condition by the thirst under which they languished in a parched desert, was revived by a sudden and unexpected rain. It is also certain, that both the heathens and the Christians looked upon this event as extraordinary and miraculous; the former attributing it to Jupiter, Mercury, or the power of magic; the latter to Christ, interposing thus unexpectedly, in consequence of their prayers. It is still further beyond all doubt, that a considerable number of Christians served at this time in the Roman army, and it is extremely probable, that, in such trying circumstances of calamity and distress, they implored the merciful interposition and succours of their God and Saviour. And as the Christians of these times looked upon all extraordinary events as miracles, and ascribed to their prayers all the uncommon and singular occurrences of an advantageous nature that happened to the Roman empire, it will not appear surprising, that upon the present occasion, they attributed the deliverance of Antoninus and his army to a miraculous interposition which they had obtained from above. But, on the other hand, it must be carefully observed, that it is an invariable maxim, universally adopted by the wise and judicious, that no events are to be esteemed miraculous, which may be rationally attributed to natural causes, and accounted for by a recourse to the ordinary dispensations of Providence; and as the unexpected shower, which restored the expiring force of the Romans, may be easily explained without rising beyond the usual and ordinary course of nature, the conclusion is manifest; nor can it be doubtful in what light we are to consider that remarkable event.

which is subjoined to his *Ægyptiaca*, in defence of this miracle; as also what is alleged against it by Dan. Larroque, in a discourse upon that subject, subjoined to the *Adversaria Sacra* of Matt. Larroque, his father. But above all, the controversy between Sir Peter King* and Mr. Walter Moyle upon this subject, is worthy of the attention of the curious; and likewise the dissertation of the learned Jablonski, inserted in the eighth volume of the *Miscellanea Leipsiensia*, p. 417, under the title of *Spicilegium de Legione Fulminatrice*. This last mentioned author investigates, with great acuteness, the reasons and motives which induced the Christians to place so inconsiderately this *shower* in the list of miracles.

* It is by mistake that Dr. Mosheim confounds Sir Peter King, lord chancellor of England with the person who carried on the controversy with Moyle concerning the *thundering legion*. Moyle's adversary was Mr. King, a clergyman, rector of Topsham, near Exeter, which was the place of his nativity, and also of the famous chancellor's who bore his name. See the letters addressed to the reverend Mr. King, in the *Posthumous Collection of Locke's Letters*, published by Collins. See also Lardner's *Collection of Heathen and Jewish Testimonies*, &c. vol. ii. p. 249, &c.

XI. The Jews were visited with new calamities, first under Trajan, and then under Adrian, when under the standards of Barcochebas, who gave himself out for the Messiah, they rose in rebellion against the Romans. In consequence of this sedition, prodigious numbers of that miserable people were put to the sword, and a new city, called *Ælia Capitolina*, was raised upon the ruins of Jerusalem, into which no Jew was permitted to enter.^o This defeat of the Jews tended to confirm, in some measure, the external tranquillity of the Christian church. For that turbulent and perfidious nation had hitherto oppressed and vexed the Christians, not only by presenting every where to the Roman magistrates complaints and accusations against them, but also by treating them in the most injurious manner in Palestine, and the neighbouring countries, because they refused to succour them against the Romans. But this new calamity, which fell upon that seditious nation, put it out of their power to exercise their malignity against the disciples of Jesus, as they had formerly done.

Sedition and
slaughter of
the Jews.

XII. Among other accessions to the splendour and force of the growing church, we may reckon the learned and ingenious labours of those philosophers and literati, who were converted to Christianity in this century. I am sensible that the advantages arising from hence to the cause of true religion will be disputed by many; and indeed, when the question is thus proposed, whether, upon the whole, the interests of Christianity have gained or lost by the writings of the learned, and the speculations of philosophers, that have been employed in its defence, I confess myself incapable of solving it in a satisfactory manner. For nothing is more manifest than this truth, that the noble simplicity and dignity of religion were sadly corrupted in many places, when the philosophers blended their opinions with its pure doctrines, and were audacious enough to submit that divine system of faith and piety to be scrutinized and modified by the fallible rule of imperfect reason.

Philosophers
converted to
Christianity.

^o Justin Mart. *Dial. cum Tryphone*, p. 49, 278.

CHAPTER II.

CONCERNING THE CALAMITOUS EVENTS WHICH HAPPENED TO THE CHURCH
IN THIS CENTURY.

I. In the beginning of this century there were no laws in force against the Christians; for the senate had annulled the cruel edicts of Nero, and Nerva had abrogated the sanguinary laws of his predecessor Domitian. But notwithstanding this, a horrid custom prevailed of persecuting the Christians, and even of putting them to death, as often as a bloody priesthood, or an outrageous populace, set on by them, demanded their destruction. Hence it happened, that even under the reign of the good Trajan, popular clamours^p were raised against the Christians, many of whom fell victims to the rage of a merciless multitude. Such were the riotous proceedings that happened in Bithynia, under the administration of Pliny the younger, who, upon that occasion, wrote to the emperor, to know in what manner he was to conduct himself toward the Christians. The answer which he received from Trajan amounted to this, “that the Christians were not to be *officiously sought after*,^q but that such as were *accused and convicted of an adherence to Christianity* were to be put to death, as wicked citizens, if they did not return to the religion of their ancestors.”

II. This edict of Trajan, being registered among the public and solemn laws of the Roman empire, set bounds indeed to the fury of those who persecuted the Christians, but was, however, the occasion of martyrdom to many, even under the best emperors. For, as often as an accuser appeared, and the person accused of an adherence to Christianity, confessed the truth of the charge, the only alternative then was apostacy or death, since a magnanimous perseverance in the Christian faith was, according to the edict of Trajan, a capital crime. And accordingly the venerable and aged Simeon, son of Cleophas, and bishop of Jerusalem, was by this very law crucified in consequence of an accusation formed against him by the Jews.^r By the same law also was the great and pious Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, ordered by Trajan him-

^p Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.* lib. iii. cap. xxxii. p. 103.

^q See Pliny's letters, book x. let. xcvii. and xcvi. which have been illustrated by many learned men, such as Vossius, Bohmer, Baldwin, Heuman, and others.

^r Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.* lib. iii. cap. xxxii. p. 103.

self to expire in the Roman theatre, exposed to the rapacity of furious beasts ;^s for as the law denounced simply death to such as were convicted of an attachment to Christ, the kind of punishment was left by the legislator to the choice of the judge.

III. Such of the Christians as could conceal their profession were indeed sheltered under the law of Trajan, which was, therefore, a disagreeable restraint upon the heathen priests, who breathed nothing but fury against the disciples of Jesus. The office of an accuser was also become dangerous, and very few were disposed to undertake it, so that the sacerdotal craft was now inventing new methods to oppress the Christians. The law of Trajan was, therefore, artfully evaded under the reign of his successor Adrian. The populace, set in motion by their priests, demanded of their magistrates, with one voice, during the public games, the destruction of the Christians ; and the magistrates, fearing that a sedition might be the consequence of despising or opposing these popular clamours, were too much disposed to indulge them in their request. During these commotions, Serenus Granianus, proconsul of Asia, represented to the emperor how barbarous and unjust it was to sacrifice to the fury of a lawless multitude, persons who had been convicted of no crime. Nor was his wise and equitable remonstrance without effect ; for Adrian, by an edict issued out to these magistrates, prohibited the putting the Christians to death, unless they were regularly accused and convicted of crimes committed against the laws ; and this edict appears to have been a solemn renewal of the law of Trajan.^t The moderation of the emperor in this edict may, perhaps, have been owing to the admirable *apologies* of Quadratus and Aristides, in favour of the Christians, which were every way proper to dispel the angry prejudices of a mind that had any sense of equity and humanity left. But it was not from the Romans alone, that the disciples of Christ were to feel oppression ; Barcochebas, the fictitious king of the Jews, whom Adrian afterward defeated, vented against them all his fury, because they refused to join his standards, and second his rebellion.^u

^s See the *Acta Martyrii Ignatiani*, published by Ruinart, and also in the collection of the *Apostolic Fathers*.

^t Compare Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.* lib. iv. cap. ix. with Balduinus *ad Edicta Principis Christianos*, p. 78.

^u Justin Mart. *Apologia secunda*, p. 72, edit. Colon.

iv. The law of Adrian, according to its natural sense, seemed to cover the Christians from the fury of their enemies, since it rendered them punishable on no other account than the *commission of crimes*, and since the magistrates refused to interpret their religion as the *crime* mentioned in the imperial edict. Therefore their enemies invented a new method of attacking them, under the reign of Antoninus Pius, even by accusing them of impiety and atheism. This calumny was refuted in an *apology* for the Christians, presented to the emperor by Justin Martyr, in consequence of which this equitable prince ordered, that all proceedings against them should be regulated by the law of Adrian.^w This, however, was not sufficient to suppress the rage of blood-thirsty persecution; for, some time after this, on occasion of some earthquakes which happened in Asia, the people renewed their violence against the Christians, whom they considered as the authors of those calamities, and treated consequently in the most cruel and injurious manner. The emperor, informed of these unjust and barbarous proceedings, addressed an edict to the whole province of Asia, in which he denounced capital punishment against such as should, for the future, accuse the Christians, without being able to prove them guilty of any crime.^x

v. This worthy prince was succeeded by Marcus Aurelius Antoninus the philosopher, whom most writers have celebrated beyond measure, on account of his extraordinary wisdom and virtue. It is not, however, in his conduct towards the Christians, that we must look for the reasons of these pompous encomiums; for here, the clemency and justice of that emperor suffer a strange eclipse. He did not, indeed, revoke the edict of Antoninus Pius, or abrogate the laws which the preceding emperors had enacted in favour of the Christians; but he did what was equally pernicious to them. Without examining impartially their cause, he lent an easy and attentive

^w Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.* lib. iv. cap. xxvi. p. 148.

^x Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.* lib. iv. cap. xiii. p. 126. ¶ It is proper to be observed, that the word *crime*, in several former edicts, had not been sufficiently determined in its signification; so that we find the enemies of the Christians, and even the Roman magistrates, applying this term to the profession of Christianity. But the equitable edict of this good emperor decided that point on the side of humanity and justice, as appears from the letter he addressed to the province of Asia, in favour of the persecuted Christians, and which concludes with the following words; "if any one, for the future, shall molest the Christians, and accuse them merely on account of their religion, let the person thus accused be discharged, though he is found to be a Christian, and the accuser be punished according to the rigour of the law."

ear to all the most virulent insinuations of their enemies, and more especially to the malignant calumnies of the philosophers, who accused them of the most horrid crimes, and the most monstrous impiety, and charged them with renewing the shocking feast of Thyestes, and the incestuous amours of the Theban prince. So that, if we except that of Nero, there was no reign under which the Christians were more injuriously and cruelly treated, than under that of the wise and virtuous Marcus Aurelius; and yet there was no reign under which such numerous and victorious *apologies* were published in their behalf. Those which Justin Martyr, Athenagoras, and Tatian drew up, upon this occasion, are still extant.

VI. This emperor issued out against the Christians, whom he regarded as a vain, obstinate, and vicious set of men, edicts,^y which, upon the whole, were very unjust; though we do not know, at this distance of time, their particular contents. In consequence of these imperial edicts, the judges and magistrates received the accusation which even slaves, and the vilest of the perjured rabble, brought against the followers of Jesus. And the Christians were put to the most cruel tortures, and were condemned to meet death in the most barbarous forms, notwithstanding their perfect innocence, and their persevering and solemn denial of the horrid crimes laid to their charge. The imperial edicts were so positive and express against inflicting punishment upon such of the Christians as were guilty of no crime, that the corrupt judges, who through motives of interest or popularity, desired their destruction, were obliged to suborn false accusers to charge them with actions, that might bring them within the reach of the laws. Hence many fell victims to cruel superstition and popular fury, seconded by the corruption of a wicked magistracy, and the connivance of a prince, who, with respect to one set of men, forgot the principles of justice and clemency which directed his conduct towards all others. Among these victims, there were many men of illustrious piety, and some of eminent learning and abilities, such as the holy and venerable Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, and Justin Martyr, so deservedly renowned for his erudition and philosophy.^z Many church-

The calamities suffered by the Christians under him.

^y See Melito ap. Euseb. *Hist. Eccles.* lib. iv. cap. xxvi. p. 147.

^z A full account of their martyrdom is to be found in the valuable work of Ruinart, entitled, *Acta Sincera Martyrum*.

es, particularly those of Lyons and Vienne, were almost entirely destroyed during this violent persecution, which raged in the year 177, and will be an indelible stain upon the memory of the prince by whose order it was carried on.^a

VII. During the reign of Commodus, the Christians suffered very little; no general persecution raged against them; and any cruelties they endured were confined to a small number, who had newly abandoned the pagan superstitions.^b But the scene changed towards the latter end of this century, when Severus was declared emperor. Then Asia, Egypt, and the other provinces, were drenched with the blood of martyrs, as appears from the testimonies of Tertullian, Clemens of Alexandria, and other writers. Those therefore are not to be followed, who affirmed, that the Christians suffered nothing under Severus before the beginning of the third century, which was distinguished by the cruel edicts of this emperor against their lives and fortunes. For, as the imperial laws against the Christians were not abrogated, and the iniquitous edicts of Trajan and Marcus Antoninus were still in force, there was a door, of consequence, open to the fury and injustice of corrupt magistrates, as often as they were pleased to exercise them upon the church. It was this series of calamities, under which it groaned toward the conclusion of the second century, which engaged Tertullian to write his *apology*, and several other books, in defence of the Christians.

VIII. It is very easy to account for the sufferings and calamities with which the disciples of Jesus were loaded, when we consider how they were blackened and rendered odious by the railings, the calumnies, and libels of the heathen priests, and the other defenders of a corrupt and most abominable system of superstition. The injurious imputations, the horrid charges of which we took notice above, are mentioned by all those who have written in defence of the Christians, and ought, indeed, to stand always upon record, as a proof both of the weakness and wickedness of their adversaries. Nothing can be more frivolous and insignificant than the ob-

Their state
under Com-
modus and
Severus.

The calum-
nies employed
to render
them odious.

^a See the letter of the Christians at Lyons, concerning this persecution, which is to be found in Eusebius's *Ecclesiastical History*, book v. ch. ii. as also in Fox's *Martyrology*, vol. i.

^b Eusebius's *Hist. Eccles.* lib. v. cap. xxiv. p. 191, cap. xvi. p. 183, cap. xviii. p. 186. cap. xix. p. 187.

jections which the most famous defenders of paganism opposed to the truth of Christianity at this time ; and such as desire a convincing proof of this assertion, have only to read the arguments of Celsus on that subject. This philosopher wrote against the Christians during the reign of Adrian, and was admirably refuted, in the following century, by Origen, who represents him as an epicurean, a mistake which has been almost generally followed, whereas it appears, with the utmost probability, that he was a Platonic philosopher of the sect of Ammonius.^c Be that as it will, Celsus was a trifling caviller, as is manifest from the answer of Origen ; nor do his writings against Christianity serve any other purpose, than to show his malignant and illiberal turn of mind.

Fronto the rhetorician, and Crescens the cynic philosopher, made also some wretched attempts against Christianity. The efforts of the former are only known by the mention that is made of them by Minutius Felix ;^d and the enterprises of the latter were confined to a vehement zeal for the ruin of the Christians, and a virulent persecution of Justin Martyr, which ended in the cruel death of that eminent saint.^e

^c The learned Dr. Lardner does not think it possible, that Celsus could have been of the sect of Ammonius ; since the former lived and wrote in the second century, whereas the latter did not flourish before the third. And indeed we learn from Origen himself, that he knew of two only of the name of Celsus, one who lived in the time of Nero, and the other in the reign of Adrian, and afterward. The latter was the philosopher who wrote against Christianity.

^d *Octavius*, p. 266, edit. Heraldii.

^e Justin Mart. *Apologia secunda*, p. 21. Tatian, *Orat. contra Græcos*, p. 72, edit. Worthii.

PART II.

INTERNAL HISTORY OF THE CHURCH.

CHAPTER I.

CONCERNING THE STATE OF LETTERS AND PHILOSOPHY DURING THIS CENTURY.

I. UNDER the reign of Trajan, letters and philosophy came forth from the retreat where they had languished during the savage tyranny of his predecessors, and, by the auspicious protection of this excellent prince, were in some measure restored to their former lustre. This happy revolution in the republic of letters, was indeed but of a short duration, as it was not supported by the following emperors, who were, for the most part, averse to literary pursuits. Even Marcus Antoninus, who surpassed them all in learning, gave protection and encouragement to the stoics alone, and after the example of that supercilious sect, treated the arts and sciences with indifference and contempt.[§] And here we see the true reason why the writers of this century are, in general, so much inferior to those of the former, in point of elegance and purity, eloquence and taste.

II. It must be observed, at the same time, that this degeneracy of erudition and taste did not amount to an utter extinction of the one and the other. For even in this century, there were, both among the Greeks and Romans, men of eminent genius and abilities, who set off, in the most advantageous manner, the learning of the times in which they lived. Among the learned Grecians, the first place is due to Plutarch, a man of vast erudition, whose knowledge was various, but indigested, and whose philosophical taste was corrupted by the skeptical tenets of the academics. There were likewise, in all the more considerable cities of the Roman empire, rhetoricians, sophists, and grammarians, who, by a variety of learned exercises, seemed zealous in forming the youth to their arts of eloquence and declamation, and in rendering

[§] Plin. epist. lib. iii. ep. 18.

[¶] In the first book of his meditations, § 7. 17.

them fit, by their talents and their acquisitions, to be useful to their country. But the instruction acquired in these schools was more specious than solid; and the youth who received their education in them, distinguished themselves at their entrance upon the active stage of life, more by empty declamation, than by true eloquence; more by pompous erudition, than by wisdom and dexterity in the management of public affairs. The consequence of this was, that the rhetoricians and sophists, though agreeable to the corrupt taste of the times, which was incapable, generally speaking, of perceiving the native charms of truth, yet fell into contempt among the prudent and the wise, who held in derision the knowledge and education that were acquired in their auditories. Beside the schools now mentioned, there were two public academies in the empire; the one at Rome, founded by Adrian, in which all the sciences were taught; and the other at Berytus in Phenicia, which was principally destined for the education of the youth in the science of law.^b

III. Many philosophers of all the different sects flourished at this time, whose names we think it not necessary to mention.ⁱ Two, however, there were of such remarkable and shining merit, as rendered them real ornaments to the Stoic philosophy, which the meditations of Marcus Antoninus and the manual of Epictetus abundantly testify. These two great men had more admirers than disciples and followers; for in this century, the stoical sect was not in the highest esteem, as the rigour and austerity of its doctrines were, by no means, suited to the dissolute manners of the times. The Platonic schools were more frequented for several reasons, and particularly for these two, that their moral precepts were less rigorous and severe than those of the stoics, and their doctrines more conformable to, or rather less incompatible with, the common opinions concerning the gods. But of all the philosophers, the Epicureans enjoyed the greatest reputation, and had undoubtedly the greatest number of followers, because their opinions tended to encourage the indolent security of a voluptuous and effeminate life, and to banish the remorse and terrors

Stoics.

Platonics.

Epicureans.

^b See the meditations of M. Antoninus, book i. § 7, 10.

ⁱ Justin Mart. *Dialog. cum Tryphone*, opp. p. 218, &c. We find also many of these philosophers mentioned in the meditations of the emperor Marc. Antoninus.

that haunt vice, and naturally incommode the wicked in their sensual pursuits.^k

iv. Toward the conclusion of this century, a new sect of philosophers arose of a sudden, spread with amazing rapidity throughout the greatest part of the Roman Empire, swallowed up almost all the other sects, and was extremely detrimental to the cause of Christianity. Alexandria in Egypt, which had been for a long time the seat of learning, and as it were, the centre of all the liberal arts and sciences, gave birth to this new philosophy. Its votaries chose to be called Platonics: though far from adhering to all the tenets of Plato, they collected, from the different sects, such doctrines as they thought conformable to truth, and formed thereof one general system. The reason then, why they distinguished themselves by the title of platonics, was, that they thought the sentiments of Plato, concerning that most noble part of philosophy, which has the Deity, and things invisible, for its objects, much more rational and sublime, than those of the other philosophers.

v. What gave to this new philosophy a superior air of reason and dignity, was the unprejudiced spirit of candour and impartiality on which it seemed to be founded. This recommended it particularly to those real sages, whose inquiries were accompanied with wisdom and moderation, and who were sick of those arrogant and contentious sects, which required an invariable attachment to their particular systems. And, indeed, nothing could have a more engaging aspect than a set of men, who, abandoning all cavil, and all prejudices in favour of any party, professed searching after the truth alone, and were ready to adopt, from all the different systems and sects, such tenets as they thought agreeable to it. From hence also they were called Eclectics. It is, however, to be observed, as we hinted in the former section, that though these philosophers were attached to no particular sect, yet they preferred, as appears from a variety of testimonies, the sublime Plato to all other sages, and approved of the most of his opinions concerning the Deity, the universe, and the human soul.

The rise of
the new Platonics
in Egypt.

Called also
Eclectics.

^k Lucian Pseudomant. p. 733, tom. i. opp.

VI. This new species of Platonism was embraced by such of the Alexandrian Christians as were desirous to retain, with the profession of the Gospel, the title, the dignity, and the habit of philosophers. It is also said to have had the particular approbation of Athenagoras, Pantænus, Clemens the Alexandrian, and all those who, in this century, were charged with the care of the public school,¹ which the Christians had at Alexandria. These sages were of opinion that *true philosophy*, the greatest and most salutary gift of God to mortals, was scattered in various portions through all the different sects; and that it was, consequently, the duty of every wise man, and more especially of every Christian doctor, to gather it from the several corners, where it lay dispersed, and to employ it, thus reunited, in the defence of religion, and in destroying the dominion of impiety and vice. The Christian Eclectics had this also in common with the others, that they preferred Plato to the other philosophers, and looked upon his opinions concerning God, the human soul, and things invisible, as conformable to the spirit and genius of the Christian doctrine.

Their discipline approved by the Christians.

VII. This philosophical system underwent some changes, when Ammonius Saccas, who taught, with the highest applause, in the Alexandrian School, about the conclusion of this century, laid the foundations of that sect which was distinguished by the name of the new Platonics. This learned man was born of Christian parents, and never, perhaps, gave up entirely the outward profession of that divine religion in which he had been educated.^m As his genius was vast

The new method of teaching philosophy introduced by Ammonius Saccas.

¹ The title and dignity of philosophers delighted so much these honest men, that, though they were advanced in the church to the rank of presbyters, they would not abandon the philosopher's cloak. See Origen, *Epist. ad Eusebium*, tom. 1. opp. p. 2. edit. de la Rue.

¶ ^m Porphyry, in his third book against the Christians, maintains, that Ammonius deserted the Christian religion, and went over to paganism as soon as he came to that time of life, when the mind is capable of making a wise and judicious choice. Eusebius, on the other hand, denies this assertion; maintains that Ammonius persevered constantly in the profession of Christianity, and is followed, in this opinion, by Valerius, Bayle, Basnage, and others. The learned Fabricius is of opinion, that Eusebius confounded together two persons, who bore the name of Ammonius, one of whom was a Christian writer, and the other a heathen philosopher. See Fabric. *Biblioth. Græca*, lib. iv. cap. xxvi. p. 159. The truth of the matter seems to have been, that Ammonius Saccas was a Christian, who adopted with such dexterity the doctrines of the pagan philosophy, as to appear a Christian to the Christians, and a pagan to the pagans. See Bruckert's *Historia Critica Philosophiæ*, vol. ii. and iii. Since the first edition of this work was published, the learned Dr. Lardner has maintained, not without a certain degree of asperity, which is unusual in his valuable writings, the opinion of Fabricius, against Eusebius, and particularly against Dr. Mosheim. See his *Collection of Heathen and Jewish Testimonies*, vol. iii. p. 195, &c. Dr. Mosheim was once of the same opinion.

and comprehensive, so were his projects bold and singular. For he attempted a general reconciliation or coalition of all sects, whether philosophical or religious, and taught a doctrine, which he looked upon as proper to unite them all, the Christians not excepted, in the most perfect harmony. And herein lies the difference between this new sect and the Eclectics, who had, before this time, flourished in Egypt. The Eclectics held, that in every sect there was a mixture of good and bad, of truth and falsehood, and accordingly, they chose and adopted out of each of them, such tenets as seemed to them conformable to reason and truth, and rejected such as they thought repugnant to both. Ammonius, on the contrary, maintained, that the great principles of all philosophical and religious truth were to be found equally in all sects; that they differed from each other only in their method of expressing them, and in some opinions of little or no importance; and that, by a proper interpretation of their respective sentiments, they might easily be united into one body. It is further to be observed, that the propensity of Ammonius to singularity and paradox, led him to maintain, that all the Gentile religions, and even the Christian, were to be illustrated and explained by the principles of this universal philosophy; but that, in order to this, the fables of the priests were to be removed from paganism, and the comments and interpretations of the disciples of Jesus from Christianity.

VIII. This arduous design, which Ammonius had formed of bringing about a coalition of all the various philosophical sects, and all the different systems of religion that prevailed in the world, required many difficult and disagreeable things in order to its execution. Every particular sect and religion must have

The principles of the Ammonian or Eclectic philosophy.

with Fabricius, and he maintained it in a dissertation, *De ecclesia turbata per recentiores Platonicos*; but he afterward saw reason to change his mind. These reasons may be seen in his book, *De rebus Christianorum ante Const. Mag. p. 281, &c.* They indeed weigh little with Dr. Lardner, who, however, opposes nothing to them but mere assertions, unsupported by the smallest glimpse of evidence. For the letter of Origen he quotes from Eusebius, is so far from proving that Ammonius was merely a heathen philosopher, and not a Christian, that it would not be sufficient to demonstrate that there was ever such a person as Ammonius in the world; since he is not so much as named in that letter. But allowing with Valesius that it is Ammonius whom Origen has in view, when he talks of the philosophical master from whom he and Heraclas received instruction, it seems very whimsical to conclude from thence, that Ammonius was no Christian. The coalition between Platonism and Christianity, in the second and third centuries, is a fact too fully proved to be rendered dubious by mere affirmations. The notion, therefore, of two persons bearing the name of Ammonius, the one a heathen philosopher, and the other a Christian writer, of which Dr. Lardner seems so fond, rests upon little more than an hypothesis formed to remove an imaginary difficulty.

several of its doctrines curtailed or distorted, before it could enter into the general mass. The tenets of the philosophers, the superstitions of the heathen priests, the solemn doctrines of Christianity, were all to suffer in this cause, and forced allegories were to be subtly employed in removing the difficulties with which it was attended. How this vast project was effected by Ammonius, the writings of his disciples and followers, that yet remain, abundantly testify. In order to the accomplishing his purpose, he supposed that true philosophy derived its origin, and its consistence from the Eastern nations; that it was taught to the Egyptians by Hermes; that it was brought from them to the Greeks, by whose vain subtilties, and litigious disputes, it was rendered somewhat obscure and deformed; but was, however, preserved in its original purity by Plato, who was the best interpreter of Hermes, and of the other oriental sages. He maintained, that all the different religions that prevailed in the world, were, in their original integrity, conformable to the genius of this ancient philosophy; but that it unfortunately happened, that the symbols and fictions, under which, according to the Eastern manner, the ancients delivered their precepts and their doctrines, were, in process of time, erroneously understood both by priests and people in a literal sense; that, in consequence of this, the invisible beings and demons, whom the Supreme Deity had placed in the different parts of the universe, as the ministers of his providence, were, by the suggestions of superstition, converted into gods, and worshipped with a multiplicity of vain ceremonies. He therefore insisted, that all the religions of all nations should be restored to their original purity, and reduced to their primitive standard, viz. "the ancient philosophy of the East;" and he affirmed, that this his project was agreeable to the intentions of Jesus Christ, whose sole view, in descending upon earth, was to set bounds to the reigning superstition, to remove the errors that had crept into the religions of all nations, but not to abolish the ancient theology from whence they were derived.

ix. Taking these principles for granted, Ammonius adopted the doctrines which were received in Egypt, the place of his birth and education, concerning the *universe* and the *Deity*, considered as constituting one great WHOLE; as also concerning the *eternity of the world*, the *nature of souls*, the *empire of Provi-*

Its chief
articles.

clence, and the *government of this world by demons*. For it is more evident, that the Egyptian philosophy, which was said to be derived from Hermes, was the basis of that of Ammonius ; or, as it is otherwise called, of *modern Platonism* ; and the book of Jamblicus, concerning the *mysteries of the Egyptians*, puts the matter beyond dispute. Ammonius, therefore, associated the sentiments of the Egyptians with the doctrines of Plato, which was easily done by adulterating some of the opinions of the latter, and forcing his expressions from their obvious and natural sense. And, to finish this conciliatory scheme, he so interpreted the doctrines of the other philosophical and religious sects, by the violent succours of art, invention, and allegory, that they seemed, at length, to bear some resemblance of the Egyptian and Platonic systems.

x. To this monstrous coalition of heterogeneous doctrines, its fanatical author added a rule of life and manners which carried an aspect of high sanctity and uncommon austerity. He, indeed, permitted the people to live according to the laws of their country, and the dictates of nature ; but a more sublime rule was laid down for the wise. They were to raise above all terrestrial things, by the towering efforts of holy contemplation, those souls whose origin was celestial and divine. They were ordered to extenuate, by hunger, thirst, and other mortifications, the sluggish body, which confines the activity, and restrains the liberty, of the immortal spirit ; that thus, in this life, they might enjoy communion with the Supreme Being, and ascend after death, active and unincumbered, to the universal Parent, to live in his presence for ever. As Ammonius was born and educated among the Christians, he set off, and even gave an air of authority to these injunctions, by expressing them partly in terms borrowed from the sacred scriptures, of which we find a vast number of citations also in the writings of his disciples. To this austere discipline, he added the pretended art of so purging and refining that faculty of the mind, which receives the images of things, as to render it capable of perceiving the demons, and of performing many marvellous things by their assistance. This art, which the disciples of Ammonius called *theurgy*, was not, however, communicated to all the schools of this fanatical philosopher, but only to those of the first rank.

The moral
discipline of
Ammonius.

XI. The extravagant attempts of Ammonius did not cease here. To reconcile the popular religions of different countries, and particularly the Christian, with this new system, he fell upon the following inventions; 1st he turned into a mere allegory the whole history of the Gods, and maintained that those beings, whom the priests and people dignified with this title, were no more than celestial ministers, to whom a certain kind of worship was due; but a worship inferior to that which was to be reserved for the Supreme Deity. 2^{dly}. He acknowledged Christ to be a most excellent man, the friend of God, the admirable *theurge*; he denied, however, that Jesus designed to abolish entirely the worship of demons, and of the other ministers of divine Providence; and affirmed, on the contrary, that his only intention was to purify the ancient religion, and that his followers had manifestly corrupted the doctrine of their divine master.ⁿ

His opinions
concerning
God and
Christ.

XII. This new species of philosophy, imprudently adopted by Origen and many other Christians, was extremely prejudicial to the cause of the Gospel, and to the beautiful simplicity of its celestial doctrines. For hence it was, that the Christian doctors began to introduce their subtle and obscure erudition into the religion of Jesus, to involve in the darkness of a vain philosophy, some of the principal truths of Christianity, that had been revealed with the utmost plainness, and were indeed obvious to the meanest capacity; and to add, to the divine precepts of our Lord, many of their own, which had no sort of foundation in any part of the sacred writings. From the same source arose that melancholy set of men, who have been distinguished by the name of mystics, whose system, when separated from the Platonic doctrine concerning the nature and origin of the soul, is but a lifeless mass, without any vigour, form, or consistence. Nor did the evils which sprung from this Ammonian philosophy end here. For, under the specious pretext of the necessity of contemplation, it gave occasion to that slothful and indolent course of

The pernicious
effects
of this philosophy.

ⁿ What we have here mentioned concerning the doctrines and opinions of Ammonius, is gathered from the writings and disputations of his disciples, who are known by the name of the modern platonics. This philosopher has left nothing in writing behind him; nay, he imposed a law upon his disciples not to divulge his doctrines among the multitude, which law, however, they made no scruple to neglect and violate. See Porphyry. *Vit. Plotini*, cap. iii. p. 97, edit. Fabricii, lib. iv. *Biblioth. Græca*. At the same time there is no sort of doubt, but that all these inventions belong properly to Ammonius, whom all the latter platonics acknowledge as the founder of their sect, and the author of their philosophy.

life which continues to be led by myriads of monks retired in cells, and sequestered from society, to which they are neither useful by their instructions, nor by their examples. To this philosophy we may trace, as to their source, a multitude of vain and foolish ceremonies, proper only to cast a veil over truth, and to nourish superstition; and which are for the most part, religiously observed by many, even in the times in which we live. It would be endless to enumerate all the pernicious consequences that may be justly attributed to this new philosophy, or rather to this monstrous attempt to reconcile falsehood with truth, and light with darkness. Some of its most fatal effects were, its alienating the minds of many, in the following ages, from the Christian religion; and its substituting, in the place of the pure and sublime simplicity of the gospel, an unseemly mixture of Platonism and Christianity.

XIII. The number of learned men among the Christians, which was very small in the preceding century, grew considerably in this. Among these there were few rhetoricians, sophists, or orators. The most part were philosophers attached to the eclectic system, though they were not at all of the same sentiments concerning the utility of letters and philosophy. Those, who were themselves initiated into the depths of philosophy, were desirous that others, particularly such as aspired to the offices of bishops or doctors, should apply themselves to the study of human wisdom, in order to their being the better qualified for defending the truth with vigour, and instructing the ignorant with success. Others were of a quite different way of thinking upon this subject, and were for banishing all argumentation and philosophy from the limits of the church, from a notion that erudition might prove detrimental to the true spirit of religion. Hence the early beginnings of that unhappy contest between *faith* and *reason*, *religion* and *philosophy*, *piety* and *genius*, which increased in the succeeding ages, and is prolonged even to our times, with a violence that renders it extremely difficult to be brought to a conclusion. Those who maintained that learning and philosophy were rather advantageous than detrimental to the cause of religion, gained, by degrees, the ascendant; and, in consequence thereof, laws were enacted, which excluded the ignorant and illiterate

The state
of learning
among Chris-
tians.

from the office of public teachers. The opposite side of the question was not, however, without defenders; and the defects and vices of learned men and philosophers contributed much to increase their number, as will appear in the progress of this history.

CHAPTER II.

CONCERNING THE DOCTORS AND MINISTERS OF THE CHURCH, AND THE FORM OF ITS GOVERNMENT.

I. THE form of ecclesiastical government, whose commencement we have seen in the last century, was brought in this, to a greater degree of stability and consistence. One inspector, or *bishop*, presided over each Christian assembly, to which office he was elected by the voices of the whole people. In this post he was to be watchful and provident, attentive to the wants of the church, and careful to supply them. To assist him in this laborious province, he formed a council of *presbyters*, which was not confined to any fixed number; and to each of these he distributed his task, and appointed a station in which he was to promote the interests of the church. To the bishops and presbyters, the ministers, or *deacons*, were subject; and the latter were divided into a variety of classes, as the different exigencies of the church required.

The form of church government.

II. During a great part of this century, the Christian churches were independent on each other; nor were they joined together by association, confederacy, or any other bonds but those of charity. Each Christian assembly was a little state, governed by its own laws, which were either enacted, or at least approved by the society. But, in process of time, all the Christian churches of a province were formed into one large ecclesiastical body, which like confederate states, assembled at certain times, in order to deliberate about the common interests of the whole. This institution had its origin among the Greeks, with whom nothing was more common than this confederacy of independent states, and the regular assemblies which met, in consequence thereof, at fixed times, and were composed of the deputies of each respective state. But these ecclesiastical associations were not

Association of the provincial churches.

long confined to the Greeks; their great utility was no sooner perceived, than they became universal, and were formed in all places where the gospel had been planted.^o To these assemblies, in which the deputies or commissioners of several churches consulted together, the names of *synods* was appropriated by the Greeks, and that of *councils* by the Latins; and the laws that were enacted, in these general meetings, were called *canons*, i. e. *rules*.

Origin of
councils.

The authority
of the bishops
augmented by
these councils.

III. These *councils*, of which we find not the smallest trace before the middle of this century, changed the whole face of the church, and gave it a new form: for by them the ancient privileges of the people were considerably diminished, and the power and authority of the bishops greatly augmented. The humility, indeed, and prudence of these pious prelates prevented their assuming all at once the power with which they were afterward invested. At their first appearance in these general councils, they acknowledged that they were no more than the delegates of their respective churches, and that they acted in the name, and by the appointment of their people. But they soon changed this humble tone, imperceptibly extended the limits of their authority, turned their influence into dominion, and their counsels into laws; and openly asserted, at length, that Christ had empowered them to prescribe to his people *authoritative rules of faith and manners*. Another effect of these councils was, the gradual abolition of that perfect equality, which reigned among all bishops in the primitive times. For the order and decency of these assemblies required, that some one of the provincial bishops met in council, should be invested with a superior degree of power and authority; and hence the rights of metropolitans derive their origin. In the mean time, the bounds of the church were enlarged; the custom of holding councils was followed wherever the sound of the gospel had reached; and the universal church had now the appearance of one vast republic, formed by a combination of a great number of little states. This occasioned the creation of a new order of ecclesiastics, who were appointed, in different parts of the world, as heads of the church, and whose office it was to preserve the consistence

Metropolitans.

and union of that immense body, whose members were so widely dispersed throughout the nations. Such was the nature and office of the *patriarchs*, among whom, at length, ambition being arrived at its most insolent period, formed a new dignity, investing the bishop of Rome, and his successors, with the title and authority of prince of the patriarchs.

iv. The Christian doctors had the good fortune to persuade the people, that the ministers of the Christian church succeeded to the character, rights, and privileges of the Jewish priesthood; and this persuasion was a new source both of honours and profit to the sacred order. This notion was propagated with industry some time after the reign of Adrian, when the second destruction of Jerusalem had extinguished among the Jews all hopes of seeing their government restored to its former lustre, and their country arising out of ruins. And, accordingly, the *bishops* considered themselves as invested with a rank and character similar to those of the *high-priest* among the Jews, while the *presbyters* represented the priests, and the *deacons* the *Levites*. It is, indeed, highly probable, that they, who first introduced this absurd comparison of offices so entirely distinct, did it rather through ignorance and error, than through artifice or design. The notion, however, once introduced, produced its natural effects; and these effects were pernicious. The errors to which it gave rise were many; and one of its immediate consequences was, the establishing a greater difference between the Christian pastors and their flock, than the genius of the gospel seems to admit.

An artful parallel drawn between the Christian and the Jewish priesthood.

v. From the government of the church, let us turn our eyes to those who maintained its cause by their learned and judicious writings. Among these was Justin, a man of eminent piety and considerable learning, who, from a pagan philosopher, became a Christian martyr. He had frequented all the different sects of philosophy, in an ardent and impartial pursuit of truth; and finding, neither among Stoics nor Peripatetics, neither in the Pythagorean nor Platonic schools, any satisfactory account of the perfections of the Supreme Being, and the nature and destination of the human soul, he embraced Christianity on account of the light which it cast upon these interesting subjects. We have yet remaining his two *apologies* in be-

The principal writers.

half of the Christians, which are most deservedly held in high esteem; notwithstanding that in some passages of them, he shows himself an unwary disputer, and betrays a want of acquaintance with ancient history.

Irenæus, bishop of Lyons, a Greek by birth, and probably born of Christian parents, a disciple also of Polycarp, by whom he was sent to preach the gospel among the Gauls, is another of the writers of this century, whose labours were singularly useful to the church. He turned his pen against its internal and domestic enemies, by attacking the monstrous errors which were adopted by many of the primitive Christians, as appears by his *five books against heresies*, which are yet preserved in a Latin translation,^p and are considered as one of the most precious monuments of ancient erudition.

Athenagoras also deserves a place among the estimable writers of this age. He was a philosopher of no mean reputation, and his *apology* for the Christians, as well as his *treatise upon the resurrection*, afford striking proofs of his learning and genius.

The works of Theophilus, bishop of Antioch, are more remarkable for their erudition, than for their order and method; this, at least, is true of his *three books in defence of Christianity*, addressed to Autolycus.^q But the most illustrious writer of this century, and the most justly renowned for his various erudition, and his perfect acquaintance with the ancient sages, was Clemens, the disciple of Pantæus, and the head of the Alexandrian school, destined for the instruction of the catechumens. His *Stromata*, *Pedagogue*, and *Exhortation*, addressed to the Greeks, which are yet extant, abundantly show the extent of his learning, and the force of his genius; though he is neither to be admired for the precision of his ideas, nor for the perspicuity of his style. It is also to be lamented, that his excessive attachment to the reigning philosophy led him into a variety of pernicious errors.

[^p] The first book is yet extant in the original Greek; of the rest, we have only a Latin version, through the barbarity of which, though excessive, it is easy to discern the eloquence and erudition that reign throughout the original. See *Hist. Littéraire de la France*.

[^q] Theophilus was the author of several works, beside those mentioned by Dr. Mosheim, particularly of a *commentary upon the Proverbs*, another upon the *Four Evangelists*, and of several short and pathetic discourses, which he published from time to time, for the use of his flock. He also wrote against Marcian and Hermogenes, and, refuting the errors of these heretics, he quotes several passages of the *Revelation*.

Hitherto we have made no mention of the Latin writers, who employed their pens in the Christian cause. And indeed, the only one of any note, we find in this century, is Tertullian, by birth a Carthaginian, who, having first embraced the profession of the law, became afterward a presbyter of the church, and concluded by adopting the heretical visions of Montanus. He was a man of extensive learning, of a fine genius, and highly admired for his elocution in the Latin tongue. We have several works of his yet remaining, which were designed to explain and defend the truth, and to nourish pious affections in the hearts of Christians. There was, indeed, such a mixture in the qualities of this man, that it is difficult to fix his real character, and to determine which of the two were predominant, his *virtues*, or his *defects*. He was endowed with a great genius, but seemed deficient in point of judgment. His piety was warm and vigorous, but, at the same time, melancholy and austere. His learning was extensive and profound; and yet his credulity and superstition were such as might have been expected from the darkest ignorance. And with respect to his reasonings, they had more of that subtilty that dazzles the imagination, than of that solidity that brings light and conviction to the mind.^r



CHAPTER III.

CONCERNING THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN THIS CENTURY.

I. THE Christian system, as it was hitherto taught, preserved its native and beautiful simplicity, and was comprehended in a small number of articles. The public teachers inculcated no other doctrines, than those that are contained in what is commonly called the *Apostles' Creed*; and, in the method of illustrating them, all vain subtilties, all mysterious researches, every thing that was beyond the reach of common capacities, were carefully avoided. This will by no means appear surpri-

The simplicity of primitive Christianity.

^r It is proper to point out to such as are desirous of a more particular account of the works, as also of the excellencies and defects of these ancient writers, the authors who have professedly written concerning them, and the principal are those who follow: Jo. Alb. Fabricius, in *Biblioth. Græc. et Latin.* Cave, *Hist. Litter. Scriptor. Eccl.* Du Pin et Cellier, *Biblioth. des Auteurs Ecclesiastiques.*

sing to those who consider, that, at this time, there was not the least controversy about those capital doctrines of Christianity, which were afterward so keenly debated in the church ; and who reflect, that the bishops of these primitive times were, for the most part, plain and illiterate men, remarkable rather for their piety and zeal, than for their learning and eloquence.

II. This venerable simplicity was not, indeed, of a long duration ; its beauty was gradually effaced by the laborious efforts of human learning, and the dark subtleties of imaginary science. Acute researches were employed upon several religious subjects, concerning which ingenious decisions were pronounced ; and, what was worst of all, several tenets of a chimerical philosophy were imprudently incorporated into the Christian system. This disadvantageous change, this unhappy alteration of the primitive simplicity of the Christian religion, was chiefly owing to two reasons ; the one drawn from pride, and the other from a sort of necessity. The former was the eagerness of certain learned men, to bring about a union between the doctrines of Christianity and the opinions of the philosophers ; for they thought it a very fine accomplishment, to be able to express the precepts of Christ in the language of *philosophers, civilians, and rabbins*. The other reason that contributed to alter the simplicity of the Christian religion was, the necessity of having recourse to logical definitions and nice distinctions, in order to confound the sophistical arguments which the infidel and the heretic employed, the one to overturn the Christian system, and the other to corrupt it. ¶ These philosophical arms, in the hands of the judicious and wise, were both honourable and useful to religion ; but when they came to be handled by every ignorant and self-sufficient meddler, as was afterward the case, they produced nothing but perplexity and confusion, under which genuine Christianity almost disappeared.

III. Many examples might be alleged, which verify the observations we have now been making ; and, if the reader is desirous of a striking one, he has only to take a view of the doctrines which began to be taught in this century, concerning the state of the soul after the dissolution of the body. Jesus and his disciples had simply declared, that the souls of good men were, at their departure from their bodies, to be received

This proved
by an exam-
ple.

into heaven, while those of the wicked were to be sent to hell; and this was sufficient for the first disciples of Christ to know, as they had more piety than curiosity, and were satisfied with the knowledge of this solemn fact, without any inclination to penetrate its *manner*, or to pry into its secret reasons. But this plain doctrine was soon disguised, when Platonism began to infect Christianity. Plato had taught, that the souls of heroes, of illustrious men, and eminent philosophers alone, ascended, after death, into the mansions of light and felicity; while those of the generality, weighed down by their lusts and passions, sunk into the infernal regions, from whence they were not permitted to emerge, before they were purified from their turpitude and corruption.^s This doctrine was seized with avidity by the Platonic Christians, and applied as a commentary upon that of Jesus. Hence a notion prevailed, that the *martyrs* only entered upon a state of happiness immediately after death, and that, for the rest, a certain obscure region was assigned, in which they were to be imprisoned until the second coming of Christ, or, at least, until they were purified from their various pollutions. This doctrine, enlarged and improved upon by the irregular fancies of injudicious men, became a source of innumerable errors, vain ceremonies, and monstrous superstitions.

iv. But, however the doctrines of the gospel may have been abused by the commentaries and interpretations of different sects, yet all were unanimous in regarding with veneration the holy Scriptures, Zeal for
the holy
Scriptures. as the great rule of faith and manners; and hence that laudable and pious zeal of adapting them to general use. We have mentioned already the translations that were made of them into different languages, and it will not be improper to say something here concerning those who employed their useful labours in explaining and interpreting them. Pantænus, the head of the Alexandrian school, was probably the first, who enriched the church with a version of the sacred writings, which has been lost among the ruins of time. The same fate attended the *commentary* of Clemens the Alexandrian, upon the *canonical epistles*; and also another celebrated work of the same author, in

^s See an ample account of the opinions of the Platonics, and other ancient philosophers, upon this subject, in the notes which Dr. Mosheim has added to his Latin translation of Cudworth's *Intellectual System*, tom. ii. p. 1036.

^t Viz. Clementis *Hypotyposes*.

which he is said to have explained, in a compendious manner, almost all the sacred writings. The *harmony of the Evangelists*, composed by Tatian, is yet extant. But the *exposition of the Revelation*, by Justin Martyr, and of the *four gospels* by Theophilus, bishop of Antioch, together with several illustrations of the Mosaic history of the creation, by other ancient writers, are all lost.

v. The loss of these ancient productions is the less to be regretted, as we know, with certainty, their vast inferiority to the expositions of the holy Scriptures that appeared in succeeding times. Among the persons already mentioned, there was none who deserved the name of an eminent and judicious interpreter of the sacred text. They all attributed a *double sense* to the words of Scripture, the one *obvious* and literal, the other *hidden* and mysterious, which lay concealed, as it were, under the veil of the outward letter. The former they treated with the utmost neglect, and turned the whole force of their genius and application to unfold the latter; or, in other words, they were more studious to darken the holy Scriptures with their idle fictions, than to investigate their true and natural sense. Some of them also forced the expressions of sacred writ out of their obvious meaning, in order to apply them to the support of their philosophical systems; of which dangerous and pernicious attempts, Clemens of Alexandria is said to have given the first example. With respect to the expositors of the Old Testament in this century, we shall only make this general remark, that their excessive veneration for the Alexandrian version, commonly called the Septuagint, which they regarded almost as of divine authority, confined their views, fettered, as it were, their critical spirit, and hindered them from producing any thing excellent in the way of sacred criticism or interpretation.

vi. If this age was not very fertile in sacred criticisms, it was still less so in expositors of the doctrinal parts of religion; for hitherto there was no attempt made, at least that is come to our knowledge, of composing a *system*, or complete view of the Christian doctrine. Some treatises of Arabian, relative to this subject, are indeed mentioned; but as they are lost, and seem not to have been much known by any of the writers whose works have survived them, we can form no conclusions concern-

Of systematic divinity

ing them. The books of Papias, concerning the *sayings of Christ and his apostles*, were, according to the accounts which Eusebius gives of them, rather an historical commentary, than a theological system. Melito, bishop of Sardis, is said to have written several treatises, one concerning *faith*, another on the *creation*, a third concerning the *church*, and a fourth concerning *truth*; but it does not appear from the titles of these writings, whether they were of a doctrinal or controversial nature." Several of the polemic writers, indeed, have been naturally led, in the course of controversy, to explain amply certain points of religion. But those doctrines, which have not been disputed, are very rarely defined with such accuracy, by the ancient writers, as to point out to us clearly what their opinions concerning them were. And from hence it ought not to appear surprising, that all the different sects of Christians, pretend to find, in the writings of the fathers, decisions favourable to their respective tenets.

VII. The controversial writers, who shone in this century, had three different sorts of adversaries to combat; the Jews, the pagans, and those, who, in the bosom of Christianity, corrupted its doctrines, and produced various sects and divisions in the church. Justin Martyr, and Tertullian, embarked in a controversy with the Jews, which it was not possible for them to manage with the highest success and dexterity, as they were very little acquainted with the language, the history, and the learning of the Hebrews, and wrote with more levity and inaccuracy, than was justifiable on such a subject. Of those who managed the cause of Christianity against the pagans, some performed this important task by composing *apologies* for the Christians; and others by addressing pathetic exhortations to the Gentiles. Among the former were Athenagoras, Melito, Quadratus, Miltiades, Aristides, Tatian, and Justin Martyr; and among the latter, Tertullian, Clemens, Justin, and Theophilus bishop of Antioch. All these writers attacked, with judgment, dexterity, and success, the pagan superstition,

The controversial writers.

See "Melito, beside his *apology* for the Christians, and the treatises mentioned by Dr. Mosheim here, wrote a discourse upon Easter, and several other dissertations, of which we have only some scattered fragments remaining; but what is worthy of remark here, is, that he is the first Christian writer that has given us a catalogue of the books of the Old Testament. His catalogue also is perfectly conformable to that of the Jews except in this point only, that he has omitted in it the book of *Esther*.

and also defended the Christians, in a victorious manner, against all the calumnies and aspersions of their enemies. But they did not succeed so well in unfolding the true nature and genius of Christianity, nor were the arguments they made use of to demonstrate its truth and divinity so full of energy, so striking and irresistible, as those by which they overturned the pagan system. In a word, both their explication and defence of many of the doctrines of Christianity are defective and unsatisfactory in several respects. As to those who directed their polemic efforts against the heretics, their number was prodigious, though few of their writings have come down to our times. Irenæus refuted the whole tribe, in a work destined solely for that purpose. Clemens,^w Tertullian,^x and Justin Martyr, wrote also against all the sectaries; but the work of the last, upon that subject, is not extant. It would be endless to mention those who combated particular errors, of whose writings, also, many have disappeared amidst the decays of time, and the revolutions that have happened in the republic of letters.

VIII. If the primitive defenders of Christianity were not Good and bad qualities of the ancient disputants. always happy in the choice of their arguments, yet they discovered more candour and probity than those of the following ages. The artifice of sophistry, and the habit of employing pious frauds in support of the truth, had not, as yet, infected the Christians. And this indeed, is all that can be said in their behalf; for they are worthy of little admiration on account of the accuracy or depth of their reasonings. The most of them appear to have been destitute of penetration, learning, order, application, and force. They frequently make use of arguments void of all solidity, and much more proper to dazzle the fancy, than to enlighten and convince the mind. One, laying aside the sacred writings, from whence all the weapons of religious controversy ought to be drawn, refers to the decisions of those bishops who ruled the apostolic churches. Another thinks, that the antiquity of a doctrine is a mark of its truth, and pleads prescription against his adversaries, as if he was maintaining his property before a civil magistrate; than which method of disputing nothing can be more pernicious to the cause of truth.

^w In his work, entitled, *Stromata*.

^x In his *Præscriptiones adversus hæreticos*.

A third imitates those wrong headed disputants among the Jews, who, infatuated with their cabalistic jargon, offered, as arguments, the imaginary *powers* of certain mystic words and chosen numbers.^y Nor do they seem to err, who are of opinion, that in this century, that vicious method^z of disputing, which afterward obtained the name of *economical*, was first introduced.^a

ix. The principal points of morality were treated of by Justin Martyr, or, at least, by the writer of the *epistle to Zena and Serenus*, which is to be found Moral writers. among the works of that celebrated author. Many other writers confined themselves to particular branches of the moral system, which they handled with much attention and zeal. Thus Clemens, of Alexandria, wrote several treatises concerning *calumny, patience, continence*, and other virtues, which discourses have not reached our times. Those of Tertullian upon *chastity*, upon *flight in the time of persecution*, as also upon *fasting, shows, female ornaments*, and *prayer*, have survived the waste of time, and might be read with much fruit, were the style, in which they are written, less laboured and difficult, and the spirit they breathe less melancholy and morose.

x. Learned men are not unanimous concerning the degree of esteem that is due to the authors now mentioned, and the other ancient moralists. Some Of the merit of the fathers, as moral writers. represent them as the most excellent guides in the paths of piety and virtue; while others place them in the very lowest rank of moral writers, consider them as the very worst of all instructors, and treat their precepts and decisions as perfectly insipid, and, in many respects, pernicious. We leave the determination of this point to such as are more capable of pronouncing decisively upon it, than we pretend to be.^b It however appears to us incon-

y Several examples of this senseless method of reasoning, are to be found in different writers. See particularly Basnage, *Histoire des Juifs*, tom. iii. p. 660, 694.

z The *economical* method of disputing was that in which the disputants accommodated themselves, as far as was possible, to the taste and prejudices of those whom they were endeavouring to gain over to the truth. Some of the first Christians carried this condescension too far, and abused St. Paul's example, 1 Cor. ix. 20, 21, 22, to a degree inconsistent with the purity and simplicity of the Christian doctrine.

a Rich. Simon, *Histoire Critique des principaux commentateurs du N. T.* cap. ii. p. 21.

b This question was warmly and learnedly debated between the deservedly celebrated Barbeyrac and Cellier a Benedictine monk. Buddeus has given us a history of this controversy with his own judgment of it, in his *Isagoge ad Theologiam*, lib. ii. cap. iv. p. 620, &c. Barbeyrac, however, published after this a particular treatise in defence of the severe sentence he had pronounced against the *fathers*. This ingenious performance was printed at Amsterdam in 1720, under the title of *Traite sur la Morale des Peres*: and is highly

testable, that, in the writings of the primitive fathers, there are several sublime sentiments, judicious thoughts, and many things that are naturally adapted to form a religious temper, and to excite pious and virtuous affections; while it must be confessed, on the other hand, that they abound still more with precepts of an excessive and unreasonable austerity, with stoical and academical dictates, vague and indeterminate notions, and, what is yet worse, with decisions that are absolutely false, and in evident opposition to the precepts of Christ. Before the question mentioned above, concerning the merit of the ancient fathers, as moralists, be decided, a previous question must be determined, viz. What is meant by a bad director in point of morals? and, if by such a person be meant, one who has no determinate notion of the nature and limits of the duties incumbent upon Christians, no clear and distinct ideas of virtue and vice; who has not penetrated the spirit and genius of those sacred books, to which alone we must appeal in every dispute about Christian virtue, and who, in consequence thereof, fluctuates often in uncertainty, or falls into error in explaining the divine laws, though he may frequently administer sublime and pathetic instruction; if, by a bad guide in morals, such a person, as we have now delineated, be meant, then it must be confessed, that this title belongs indisputably to many of the fathers.

xi. The cause of morality, and, indeed, of Christianity in general, suffered deeply by a capital error which was received in this century; an error admitted without any evil design, but yet with the utmost imprudence, and which, through every period of the church, even until the present time, has produced other errors without number, and multiplied the evils under which the gospel has so often groaned. Jesus Christ prescribed to all his disciples one and the same rule of life and manners. But certain Christian doctors, either through a desire of imitating the nations among whom they lived, or in consequence of a natural propensity to a life of austerity, which is a disease not uncommon in Syria, Egypt, and other eastern provinces, were induced to maintain, that Christ had established a *double rule of sanctity and virtue*,

The double doctrine of certain moralists.

worthy of the perusal of those who have a taste for this most interesting branch of literature, though they will find in it some imputations cast upon the fathers, against which they may be easily defended.

for two different orders of Christians. Of these *rules* the *one* was ordinary, the *other* extraordinary; the *one* of a lower dignity, the *other* more sublime; the *one* for persons in the active scenes of life, the *other* for those, who, in a sacred retreat, aspired after the glory of a celestial state. In consequence of this wild system, they divided into two parts all those moral doctrines and instructions which they had received either by writing or tradition. One of these divisions they called *precepts*, and the other *counsels*. They gave the name of *precepts* to those laws, that were universally obligatory upon all orders of men; and that of *counsels* to those that related to Christians of a more sublime rank, who proposed to themselves great and glorious ends, and breathed after an intimate communion with the Supreme Being.

XII. This *double doctrine* produced, all of a sudden, a new set of men, who made profession of uncommon degrees of sanctity and virtue, and declared their resolution of obeying all the *counsels* of Christ, in order to their enjoying communion with God here; and also, that, after the dissolution of their mortal bodies, they might ascend to him with the greater facility, and find nothing to retard their approach to the supreme centre of happiness and perfection. They looked upon themselves as prohibited the use of things, which it was lawful for other Christians to enjoy, such as *wine, flesh, matrimony, and commerce.*^c They thought it their indispensable duty to extenuate the body by watchings, abstinence, labour, and hunger. They looked for felicity in solitary retreats, in desert places, where, by severe and assiduous efforts of sublime meditation, they raised the soul above all external objects, and all sensual pleasures. Both men and women, imposed upon themselves the most severe tasks, the most austere discipline; all which, however the fruit of pious intention, was in the issue, extremely detrimental to Christianity. These persons were called Ascetics. Σπυδαῖοι Ἐκλεκτοί, and philosophers; nor were they only distinguished by their title from other Christians, but also by their garb.^d In this century, indeed, such as embraced this austere kind of life, submitted themselves to all these mortifications in private, without breaking asunder their social bonds, or

c Athenagoras, *Apologia pro Christianis*. cap. xxviii. p. 129, edit. Oxon.

d See Salmas. *Comm. in Tertullianum de Pallio*, p. 7, 8, &c.

withdrawing themselves from the concourse of men. But, in process of time, they retired into deserts; and, after the example of the Essenes and Therapeutæ, they formed themselves into certain companies.

XIII. Nothing is more obvious than the reasons that gave rise to this austere sect. One of the principal, was the ill judged ambition of the Christians to resemble the Greeks and Romans, many of whose sages and philosophers distinguished themselves from the generality by their maxims, by their habit, and, indeed, by the whole plan of life and manners which they had formed to themselves, and by which they acquired a high degree of esteem and authority. It is also well known, that of all these philosophers, there were none, whose sentiments and discipline were so well received by the ancient Christians as those of the platonics and pythagoreans, who prescribed in their lessons *two* rules of conduct; *one* for the sages, who aspired to the sublimest heights of virtue; and *another* for the people, involved in the cares and hurry of an active life.* The law of moral conduct, which the platonics prescribed to the philosophers, was as follows; “the soul of the wise man ought to be removed to the greatest possible distance from the contagious influence of the body. And as the depressing weight of the body, the force of its appetites, and its connexions with a corrupt world, are in direct opposition to this sacred obligation; therefore all sensual pleasures are to be carefully avoided; the body is to be supported, or rather extenuated, by a slender diet; *solitude* is to be sought as the true mansion of virtue; and *contemplation* to be employed as the means of raising the soul, as far as is possible, to a sublime freedom from all corporeal ties, and to a noble elevation above all terrestrial things.† The person who lives in this manner, shall enjoy, even in the present state, a certain degree of communion with the Deity; and when the corporeal mass is dissolved, shall immediately ascend to the sublime regions of felicity

* These famous sects made an important distinction between *living according to nature*, Ζην κατὰ φύσιν and *living above nature* Ζην ὑπὲρ φύσιν. The former was the rule prescribed to the vulgar; the latter, that which was to direct the conduct of the philosophers, who aimed at superior degrees of virtue. See ENÆAS GAZEUS in *Theophrast.* p. 29, edit. Barthii.

† The reader will find the principles of this fanatical discipline, in Porphyry's book περὶ ἀποχῆς, i. e. concerning *abstinence*. That celebrated Platonist has explained at large the respective duties that belong to *active* and *contemplative* life, book i. § 27. and 41.

and perfection, without passing through that state of purification and trial, that awaits the generality of mankind." It is easy to perceive, that this rigorous discipline was a natural consequence of the peculiar opinions which these philosophers, and some others that resembled them, entertained, concerning the *nature of the soul*, the *influence of matter*, the *operations of invisible beings or demons*, and the *formation of the world*. And as these opinions were adopted by the more learned among the Christians, it was but natural that they should embrace also the moral discipline which flowed from them.

xiv. There is a particular consideration that will enable us to render a natural account of the origin of those religious severities, of which we have been now speaking, and that is drawn from the genius The progress of this discipline. and temper of the people by whom they were first practised. It was in Egypt that this morose discipline had its rise; and it is observable, that that country has, in all times, as it were by an immutable law, or disposition of nature, abounded with persons of a melancholy complexion, and produced, in proportion to its extent, more gloomy spirits than any other part of the world.^g It was here that the Essenes and the Therapeutæ, those dismal and gloomy sects, dwelt principally, long before the coming of Christ; as also many others of the Ascetic tribe, who, led by a certain melancholy turn of mind, and a delusive notion of rendering themselves more acceptable to the Deity by their austerities, withdrew themselves from human society, and from all the innocent pleasures and comforts of life.^h From Egypt this sour and unsociable discipline passed into Syria, and the neighbouring countries, which also abounded with persons of the same dismal constitution with that of the Egyptians;ⁱ and from thence, in process of time, its infection reached to the European nations. Hence that train of austere and superstitious vows and rites, that yet, in many places, cast a veil over the beauty and simplicity of the Christian religion. Hence the celibacy of the priestly order, the rigour of unprofitable penances and mortifications, the innumerable swarms of monks that refused their

^g See Maillet, *Description de l'Egypte*, tom. ii. p. 57, edit. in 4to. de Paris.

^h Herodot. *Histor.* lib. ii. p. 104, edit. Gronov. Epiphanius, *Exposit. fidei*, § 11, tom. ii. opp. p. 1092. Tertullian, *De exhortatione castitat.* cap. xiii. p. 524, edit. Priorii. Athanasius, *in vita Antonii*, tom. ii. opp. p. 453.

ⁱ Jo. Chardin *Voyages en Perse*, tom. iv. p. 197, edit. Amsterd. 1735, 4to.

talents and labours to society, and this in the senseless pursuit of a visionary sort of perfection. Hence also that distinction between the *theoretical* and *mystical* life, and many other fancies of a like nature, which we shall have occasion to mention in the course of this history.

xv. It is generally true, that delusions travel in a train, and that one mistake produces many. The Christians, who adopted the austere system, which has been already mentioned, had certainly made a very false step, and done much injury to their excellent and most reasonable religion. But they did not stop here; another erroneous practice was adopted by them, which, though it was not so universal as the other, was yet extremely pernicious, and proved a source of numberless evils to the Christian church. The platonists and pythagoreans held it as a maxim, that it was not only lawful, but even praiseworthy, to *deceive*, and even to use the expedient of a *lie*, in order to advance the cause of *truth* and *piety*. The Jews, who lived in Egypt, had learned and received this maxim from them before the coming of Christ, as appears incontestably from a multitude of ancient records; and the Christians were infected from both these sources with the same pernicious error, as appears from the number of books attributed falsely to great and venerable names, from the *Sibylline verses*, and several suppositious productions, which were spread abroad in this and the following century. It does not, indeed, seem probable, that all these *pious frauds* were chargeable upon the professors of *real* Christianity, upon those who entertained just and rational sentiments of the religion of Jesus. The greatest part of these fictitious writings, undoubtedly, flowed from the fertile invention of the gnostic sects, though it cannot be affirmed that even true Christians were entirely innocent and irreproachable in this matter.

xvi. As the boundaries of the church were enlarged, the number of vicious and irregular persons, who entered into it were proportionably increased, as appears from the many complaints and censures that we find in the writers of this century. Several methods were made use of to stem the torrent of iniquity. *Excommunication* was peculiarly employed to prevent or punish the most heinous and enormous crimes; and the crimes, esteemed such, were *murder*, *idolatry*, and

The rise of
pious frauds
among Chris-
tians.

Of the lives of
Christians.

Excommuni-
cation.

adultery, which terms, however, we must here understand in their more full and extensive sense. In some places, the commission of any of these sins cut off irrevocably the criminal from all hopes of restoration to the privileges of church communion; in others, after a long, laborious, and painful course of probation and discipline, they were re-admitted into the bosom of the church.^k

XVII. It is here to be attentively observed, that the form used in the exclusion of heinous offenders from the society of Christians was, at first, extremely simple. A small number of plain, yet judicious rules, made up the whole of this solemn institution, which, however, was imperceptibly altered, enlarged by an addition of a vast multitude of rites, and new modelled according to the discipline used in the heathen mysteries.^l Those who have any acquaintance with the singular reasons that obliged the Christians of those ancient times to be careful in restraining the progress of vice, will readily grant, that it was incumbent upon the rulers of the church to perfect their discipline, and to render the restraints upon iniquity more severe. They will justify the rulers of the primitive church in their refusing to restore excommunicated members to their forfeited privileges, before they had given incontestable marks of the sincerity of their repentance. Yet still it remains to be examined, whether it was expedient to borrow from the enemies of the truth the rules of this salutary discipline, and thus to sanctify, in some measure, a part of the heathen superstition. But, however delicate such a question may be, when determined with a view to all the indirect or immediate consequences of the matter in debate, the equitable and candid judge will consider principally the good intention of those from whom these ceremonies and institutions proceed, and will overlook the rest from a charitable condescension and indulgence to human weakness.

Penitential discipline among the Christians modelled imperceptibly according to that of the heathen mysteries.

^k By this distinction, we may easily reconcile the different opinions of the learned concerning the effects of excommunication. See Morinus, *De disciplina Paenitent.* lib. ix. cap. xix. p. 670. Sirmond, *Historia Paenitentiae publicæ*, cap. 1. p. 323, tom. iv. opp. As also Joseph. Augustin. Orsi, *Dissert. de criminum capitalium per tria priora sæcula absolutione*, published at Milan, 1730, 4to.

^l See Fabricius's *Bibliograph. Antiquar.* p. 397, and Morinus, *De Paenitentia*, lib. i. cap. xv. xvi. &c.

CHAPTER IV.

OF THE CEREMONIES USED IN THE CHURCH DURING THIS CENTURY.

I. **THERE** is no institution so pure and excellent which the corruption and folly of man will not in time alter for the worse, and load with additions foreign to its nature and original design. Such, in a particular manner, was the fate of Christianity. In this century, many unnecessary rites and ceremonies were added to the Christian worship, the introduction of which was extremely offensive to wise and good men.^m These changes, while they destroyed the beautiful simplicity of the gospel, were naturally pleasing to the gross multitude, who are more delighted with the pomp and splendour of external institutions, than with the native charms of rational and solid piety, and who generally give little attention to any objects but those which strike their outward senses.ⁿ But other reasons may be added to this, which, though they suppose no bad intentions, yet manifest a considerable degree of precipitation and imprudence.


II. And here we may observe in the first place, that there is a high degree of probability in the notion of those, who think that the bishops augmented the number of religious rites in the Christian worship, by way of accommodation to the infirmities and prejudices both of Jews and heathens, in order to facilitate thus their conversion to Christianity. Both Jews and heathens were accustomed to a vast variety of pompous and magnificent ceremonies in their religious service. And as they considered these rites as an essential part of religion, it was but natural that they should behold with indifference, and even with contempt, the simplicity of the Christian worship, which was destitute of those idle ceremonies that rendered their service so specious and striking. To remove then, in some measure, this prejudice against

First reasons of the multiplication of ceremonies, viz. a desire to enlarge the borders of the church.

^m Tertullian, *Lib. de Creatione*, p. 792, opp.

ⁿ It is not improper to remark here, that this attachment of the vulgar to the pomp of ceremonies, is a circumstance that has always been favourable to the ambitious views of the Romish clergy, since the pomp of religion naturally casts a part of its glory and magnificence upon its ministers, and thereby gives them, imperceptibly, a vast ascendant over the minds of the people. The late lord Bolingbroke, being present at the elevation of the host in the cathedral at Paris, expressed to a nobleman, who stood near him, his surprise that the king of France should commit the performance of such an august and striking ceremony to any subject. How far ambition may, in this and the succeeding ages, have contributed to the accumulation of gaudy ceremonies, is a question not easily to be determined.

Christianity, the bishops thought it necessary to increase the number of rites and ceremonies, and thus to render the public worship more striking to the outward senses.^o

III. This addition of external rites was also designed to remove the opprobrious calumnies, which the Jewish and pagan priests cast upon the Christians, on account of the simplicity of their worship, esteeming them little better than atheists, because they had no *temples, altars, victims, priests*, nor any thing of that external pomp in which the vulgar are so prone to place the essence of religion. The rulers of the church adopted, therefore, certain external ceremonies, that thus they might captivate the senses of the vulgar, and be able to refute the reproaches of their adversaries.  This, it must be confessed, was a very awkward, and, indeed, a very pernicious stratagem; it was obscuring the native lustre of the gospel, in order to extend its influence, and making it lose, in point of real excellence, what it gained in point of popular esteem. Some accommodations to the infirmities of mankind, some prudent instances of condescension to their invincible prejudices, are necessary in ecclesiastical, as well as in civil institutions; but they must be of such a nature, as not to inspire ideas, or encourage prejudices incompatible with just sentiments of the great object of religious worship, and of the fundamental truths which God has imparted by reason and revelation to the human race. How far this rule has been disregarded and violated, will appear too plainly in the progress of this history.

Second reason
to refute calumnies and
reproaches.

IV. A third cause of the multiplication of rites and ceremonies in the Christian church, may be deduced from the abuse of certain titles that distinguished the sacerdotal orders among the Jews. Every one

Third reason,
the abuse of
Jewish rites

^o A remarkable passage in the life of Gregory, surnamed Thaumaturgus, i. e. the wonder worker, will illustrate this point in the clearest manner. The passage is as follows: "Cum animadvertisset Gregorius, quod ob corporeas delectationes et voluptates simplex et imperitum vulgus in simulacrorum cultus errore permaneret—permisit eis, ut in memoriam et recordationem sanctorum martyrum sese oblectarent, et in lætitiis effunderentur, quod successu temporis aliquando futurum esset, ut sua sponte ad honestiorem et accuratiorem vite rationem transirent." i. e. "When Gregory perceived that the ignorant multitude persisted in their idolatry, on account of the pleasures and sensual gratifications which they enjoyed at the pagan festivals, he granted them a permission to indulge themselves in the like pleasures, in celebrating the memory of the holy martyrs, hoping, that, in process of time, they would return, of their own accord, to a more virtuous and regular course of life." There is no sort of doubt, but that, by this permission, Gregory allowed the Christians to dance, sport, and feast, at the tombs of the martyrs, upon their respective festivals, and to do every thing which the pagans were accustomed to do in their temples, during the feasts celebrated in honour of their gods.

knows, that many terms used in the New Testament, to express the different parts of the Christian doctrine and worship, are borrowed from the Jewish law, or have a certain analogy with the rites and ceremonies instituted by Moses. The Christian doctors did not only imitate this analogical manner of speaking, but they even extended it further than the apostles had done. And, though in this there was nothing worthy of reproach, yet the consequences of this method of speaking became, through abuse, detrimental to the purity of the gospel. For, in process of time, many asserted, whether through ignorance or artifice, is not easy to determine, that these forms of speech were not *figurative*, but highly *proper*, and exactly suitable to the nature of the things they were designed to express. The *bishops*, by an innocent allusion to the Jewish manner of speaking, had been called *chief priests*; the *elders*, or presbyters, had received the title of *priests*, and the *deacons* that of *levites*. But, in a little time, these titles were abused by an aspiring clergy, who thought proper to claim the same rank and station, the same rights and privileges, that were conferred with those titles upon the ministers of religion under the Mosaic dispensation. Hence the rise of *tithes*, *first fruits*, *splendid garments*, and many other circumstances of external grandeur, by which ecclesiastics were eminently distinguished. In like manner the comparison of the Christian *oblations* with the Jewish *victims* and *sacrifices* produced a multitude of unnecessary rites, and was the occasion of introducing that erroneous notion of the *eucharist*, which represents it as a *real sacrifice*, and not merely as a commemoration of that great *offering* that was once made upon the cross for the sins of mortals.

v. The profound respect that was paid to the Greek and Roman *mysteries*, and the extraordinary sanctity that was attributed to them, was a further circumstance that induced the Christians to give their religion a *mystic air*, in order to put it upon an equal foot, in point of dignity, with that of the pagans. For this purpose they gave the name of *mysteries* to the institutions of the gospel, and decorated particularly the holy sacrament with that solemn title. They used in that sacred institution, as also in that of baptism, several of the terms employed in the heathen *mysteries*; and proceeded so far, at length, as even to adopt some of the rites and

Fourth reason,
the imitation
of the heathen
mysteries.

ceremonies of which these renowned *mysteries* consisted.^p This imitation began in the eastern provinces ; but after the time of Adrian, who first introduced the mysteries among the Latins,^q it was followed by the Christians, who dwelt in the western parts of the empire. A great part, therefore, of the service of the church, in this century, had a certain air of the heathen mysteries, and resembled them considerably in many particulars.

VI. It may be yet further observed, that the custom of teaching their religious doctrines by *images, actions, signs*, and other sensible representations, which prevailed among the Egyptians, and indeed, in almost all the eastern nations, was another cause of the increase of external rites in the church.

Fifth reason,
the symbolic
manner of
teaching in
use among
the eastern
nations.

As there were many persons of narrow capacities, whose comprehension scarcely extended beyond sensible objects, the Christian doctors thought it advisable to instruct such in the essential truths of the gospel, by placing these truths, as it were, before their eyes, under sensible images. Thus they administered *milk* and *honey*, which was the ordinary food of infants, to such as were newly received into the church, showing them, by this sign, that by their baptism they were born again, and were bound to manifest the simplicity and innocence of infants in their lives and conversations. Certain military rites were borrowed to express the new and solemn engagements, by which Christians attached themselves to Christ as their leader and their chief ; and the ancient ceremony of *manumission* was used to signify the liberty of which they were made partakers, in consequence of their redemption from the guilt and dominion of sin, and their deliverance from the empire of the prince of darkness.

VII. If it be considered, in the first place, that the Christians who composed the church, were Jews and heathens, accustomed, from their birth, to various insignificant ceremonies and superstitious rites ; and if it be also considered, that such a long course of custom and education forms prejudices that are extremely obstinate and difficult to be conquered, it will then appear,

Sixth reason,
prejudices of
converted Jews
and Gentiles.

^p See, for many examples of this, Isaac Casaubon, *Exercitat.* xvi. in *Annales Baronii*, p. 478-9, &c. edit. Genev. 1654. Tollius, *Insign. itineris Italici Not.* p. 151, 163.—Spanheim's notes to his French translation of Julian's *Cæsar's*, p. 133, 134. Clarkson on *Liturgies*, p. 36, 42, 43.

^q Spartian, *Hadrian*, c. xiii. p. 15, edit. of Obrecht.

^r See Edm. Merillii *Observat.* lib. iii. cap. iii.

that nothing less than a continued miracle could have totally prevented the entrance of all superstitious mixtures into the Christian worship. A single example will tend to the illustration of this matter. Before the coming of Christ, all the eastern nations performed divine worship with their faces turned to that part of the heavens where the sun displays his rising beams. This custom was founded upon a general opinion, that God, whose *essence* they looked upon to be *light*, and whom they considered as circumscribed within certain limits, dwelt in that part of the firmament, from whence he sends forth the sun, the bright image of his benignity and glory. They, who embraced the Christian religion, rejected, indeed, this gross error, but they retained the ancient and universal custom of worshipping toward the east, which sprung from it. Nor is that custom abolished in our times, but still prevails in a great number of Christian churches. From this same source arose various rites among the Jews, which many Christians, especially those who live in the eastern countries, observe religiously at this very day.^s

VIII. We shall take no more than a brief view of these rites and ceremonies, since a particular consideration of them would lead us into endless discussions, and open a field too vast to be comprehended in such a compendious history as we here give of the Christian church. The first Christians assembled for the purposes of divine worship, in *private houses*, in *caves*, and in *vaults*, where the dead were buried. Their meetings were on the *first day of the week*; and in some places, they assembled also upon the *seventh*, which was celebrated by the Jews. Many also observed the *fourth* day of the week, on which Christ was betrayed; and the *sixth*, which was the day of his crucifixion. The hour of the day appointed for holding these religious assemblies, varied according to the different times and circumstances of the church; but it was generally in the evening after sunset, or in the morning before the dawn. During these sacred meetings, prayers were repeated, the holy Scriptures were publicly read, short discourses, upon the duties of Christians, were

Of the Christian assemblies.

^s See Spencer, *De legibus ritualibus Hebræorum*. Prolegom. p. 9, edit. Cambridge.

^t There is an excellent account given of these prayers, and of the Christian worship in general, in Tertullian's *Apology*, ch. xxxix. which is one of the most noble productions of ancient times.

addressed to the people, hymns were sung, and a portion of the *oblations*, presented by the faithful, was employed in the celebration of the Lord's supper and the feasts of charity.

ix. The Christians of this century celebrated anniversary festivals in commemoration of the death and resurrection of Christ, and of the effusion of the Holy Ghost upon the apostles. The day which was observed as the anniversary of Christ's death, was called the *paschal* day, or passover, because it was looked upon to be the same with that on which the Jews celebrated the feast of that name. In the manner, however, of observing this solemn day, the Christians of the Lesser Asia differed much from the rest, and in a more especial manner from those of Rome. They both, indeed, fasted during the *great week*, so that was called in which Christ died, and afterward celebrated, like the Jews, a sacred feast, at which they distributed a paschal lamb in memory of our Saviour's last supper. But the Asiatic Christians kept this feast on the fourteenth day of the first Jewish month, at the time that the Jews celebrated their passover, and three days after commemorated the resurrection of the triumphant Redeemer. They affirmed, that they had derived this custom from the apostles John and Philip; and pleaded moreover, in its behalf, the example of Christ himself, who held his *paschal feast* on the same day that the Jews celebrated their *passover*. The western churches observed a different method. They celebrated their *paschal* feast on the night that preceded the anniversary of Christ's resurrection, and thus connected the commemoration of the Saviour's crucifixion, with that of his victory over death and the grave. Nor did they differ thus from the Asiatics, without alleging also apostolic authority for what they did; for they pleaded that of St. Peter and St. Paul, as a justification of their conduct in this matter.

Disputes about the time of keeping Easter, or the paschal feast.

x. The Asiatic rule for keeping the *paschal feast*, was attended with two great inconveniences, to which the Christians at Alexandria and Rome, and the whole western churches, refused to submit. For, in the first place, as the Asiatics celebrated their festival the same day that Christ is said to have ate the paschal lamb with his disciples, this occasioned an inevitable interruption in the fast of the *great week*, which the other

The occasion of them, and their progress.

churches looked upon as almost criminal, at least as highly indecent. Nor was this the only inconveniency arising from this rule; for as they celebrated the memory of Christ's resurrection precisely the third day after their paschal supper, it happened, for the most part, that this great festival, which afterward was called, by the Latins, *pascha*, and to which we give the name of *Easter*, was held on other days of the week than the *first*. This circumstance was extremely displeasing to by far the greatest part of the Christians, who thought it unlawful to celebrate the resurrection of our Lord, on any day but *Sunday*, as that was the day on which this glorious event happened. Hence arose sharp and vehement contentions between the Asiatic and western Christians. About the middle of this century, during the reign of Antoninus Pius, the venerable Polycarp came to Rome to confer with Anicet, bishop of that see, upon this matter, with a view to terminate the warm disputes it had occasioned. But this conference, though conducted with great decency and moderation, was without effect. Polycarp and Anicet were only agreed in this, that the bonds of charity were not to be broken on account of this controversy; but they continued at the same time, each in their former sentiments, nor could the Asiatics be engaged by any arguments to alter the rule which they pretended to have received by tradition from St. John."

They prevail principally between the Asiatics and Romans.

XI. Toward the conclusion of this century, Victor, bishop of Rome, took it into his head to force the Asiatic Christians, by the pretended authority of his laws and decrees, to follow the rule which was observed by the western churches in this matter. Accordingly, after having taken the advice of some foreign bishops, he wrote an imperious letter to the Asiatic prelates, commanding them to imitate the example of the western Christians with respect to the time of celebrating the festival of Easter. The Asiatics answered this lordly summons by the pen of Polycrates, bishop of Ephesus, who declared, in their name, and that with great spirit and resolution, that they would by no means depart, in this matter, from the custom handed down to them by their ancestors. Upon this, the thunder of excommunication began to roar. Victor, exasperated by this resolute answer

of the Asiatic bishops, broke communion with them, pronounced them unworthy of the name of his brethren, and excluded them from all fellowship with the church of Rome. This excommunication, indeed, extended no further; nor could it cut off the Asiatic bishops from communion with the other churches, whose bishops were far from approving the conduct of Victor.^w The progress of this violent dissension was stopped by the wise and moderate remonstrances, which Irenæus, bishop of Lyons, addressed to the Roman prelate upon this occasion, in which he showed him the imprudence and injustice of the step he had taken, and also by the long letter which the Asiatic Christians wrote in their own justification. In consequence therefore of this cessation of arms, the combatants retained each their own customs, until the fourth century, when the council of Nice abolished that of the Asiatics, and rendered the time of the celebration of Easter the same through all the Christian churches.^x

XII. In these times, the sacrament of the Lord's supper was celebrated, for the most part, on Sundays, and the ceremonies observed upon that occasion were such as follow: a part of the bread and wine, which was presented among the other *oblations* of the faithful, was separated from the rest, and consecrated by the prayers of the bishop. The wine was mixed with water, and the bread was divided into several portions. A part of the consecrated bread and wine was carried to the sick or absent members of the church, as a testimony of fraternal love, sent to them by the whole society.^y It appears by many and undoubted testimonies, that this holy rite was looked upon as essential to salvation; and when this is duly considered, we shall be less disposed to censure, as erroneous, the opinion of those who have affirmed that the Lord's supper was administered to infants

The celebra-
tion of the
Lord's supper.

^w This whole affair furnishes a striking argument, among the multitude that may be drawn from Ecclesiastical History, against the supremacy and universal authority of the bishop of Rome.

^x Dr. Mosheim, in a note here, refers us for an ampler account of this controversy to his *Commentar. de rebus Christianorum ante Constantinum*, M. p. 435. He had said in that work, that Faydit had perceived the error of the common opinion, concerning the disputes that arose in the church about the time of keeping Easter. But here he retracts this encomium, and, after a second reading of Faydit's book, finds himself obliged to declare, that that writer has entirely missed the true state of the question. See the account of this controversy, that is given by the learned Heuman, in one of the treatises of his *Sylloge*, or collection of small pieces.

^y Henricus Rixnerus, *De ritibus veterum Christianorum, circa Eucharistiam*, p. 155, &c.

during this century.⁷ The *feasts of charity*, that followed the celebration of the Lord's supper, have been mentioned already.

XIII. The sacrament of *baptism* was administered publicly twice every year, at the festivals of Easter and Pentecost or Whitsuntide,^a either by the *bishop*, or the *presbyters*, in consequence of his authorization and appointment. The persons that were to be baptized, after they had repeated the *creed*, confessed and renounced their sins, and particularly the *devil*, and his pompous allurements, were immersed under water, and received into Christ's kingdom by a solemn invocation of *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*, according to the express command of our Blessed Lord. After baptism, they received the *sign of the cross*, were *anointed*, and by *prayers* and *imposition of hands*, were solemnly commended to the mercy of God, and dedicated to his service; in consequence of which they received *milk and honey*, which concluded the ceremony.^b The reasons of this particular ritual coincide with what we have said in general concerning the origin and causes of the multiplied ceremonies that crept from time to time into the church.

Adult persons were prepared for baptism by abstinence, prayer, and other pious exercises. It was to answer for them that sponsors or godfathers were first instituted, though they were afterward admitted also in the baptism of infants.^c

CHAPTER V.

CONCERNING THE HERESIES AND DIVISIONS THAT TROUBLED THE CHURCH DURING THIS CENTURY.

1. AMONG the many sects which divided the Christian church during this century, it is natural to mention, in the first place, that which an attachment to the Mosaic law separated from the rest of their

Dissensions in the church occasioned by the Jews.

⁷ See Jo. Frid. Mayer, *Diss. de Eucharistia Infantum*; as also Zornius *Hist. Eucharist. Infantum*, published at Berlin, 1736.

^a See Wall's *History of Infant Baptism* and Vicecome's *De ritibus Baptismi*.

^b See Tertullian on Baptism.

^c See Gerh. a Mastricht, *De susceptoribus infantium ex baptismo*; though he is of a different opinion in this matter, and thinks that *sponsors* were not used in the baptism of adult persons. See also Wall's *History of Infant Baptism*. [See moreover, upon this subject, Issaaci Jundt, *Arg. de Susceptorum Baptismalium origine Commentatio*, published at Strasburg in the year 1755, of which an account may be seen in the *Biblioth. des Sciences et des Beaux Arts*, tom. vi. part i. p. 13.

Christian brethren. The first rise of this sect is placed under the reign of Adrian. For, when this emperor had, at length, razed Jerusalem, entirely destroyed even its very foundations, and enacted laws of the severest kind against the whole body of the Jewish people; the greatest part of the Christians who lived in Palestine, to prevent their being confounded with the Jews, abandoned entirely the Mosaic rites, and chose a bishop, named Mark, a foreigner by nation, and consequently an alien from the commonwealth of Israel. This step was highly shocking to those whose attachment to the Mosaic rites was violent and invincible; and such was the case of many. These, therefore, separated themselves from the brethren, and founded at Pera, a country of Palestine, and in the neighbouring parts, particular assemblies, in which the law of Moses maintained its primitive dignity, authority, and lustre.^d

II. This body of judaizing Christians, which set Christ and Moses upon an equal foot, in point of authority, was afterward divided into two sects, extremely different both in their rites and in their opinions, and distinguished by the names of Nazarenes and Ebionites. The former are not placed by the ancient Christians in the heretical register;^e but the latter were considered as a sect, whose tenets were destructive of the fundamental principles of the Christian religion. These sects made use of a *gospel* or history of Christ, different from that which is received among us, and concerning which there have been many disputes among the learned.^f The term Nazarenes was not originally the name of a sect, but that which distinguished the disciples of Jesus in general. And as those, whom the Greeks called Christians, received the name of Nazarenes among the Jews, this latter name was not considered as a mark of ignominy or contempt. Those, indeed, who, after their separation from their brethren, retained the title of Nazarenes, differed

Origin of the
Nazarenes
and Ebion-
ites.

^d Vid. Sulpitius Severus, *Hist. Sacra*, lib. ii. cap. xxxi. p. 245.

^e Epiphanius was the first writer who placed the Nazarenes in the list of heretics. He wrote in the fourth century, but is very far from being remarkable, either for his fidelity or judgment.

^f This gospel, which was called indiscriminately the gospel of the Nazarenes or Hebrews, is certainly the same with the gospel of the Ebionites, the gospel of the XII apostles, and is very probably that which St. Paul refers to, Galatians, ch. i. ver. 6. Dr. Mosheim refers his readers, for an account of this gospel, to Fabricius, in his *Codex Apocryph. Nov. Test.* tom. i. p. 355, and to a work of his own, entitled, *Vindiciæ contra Tolandî Nazarenum*, p. 112. The reader will, however, find a still more accurate and satisfactory account of this gospel, in the first volume of the learned and judicious Mr. Jones's incomparable *Method of settling the Canonical Authority of the New Testament*.

much from the true disciples of Christ, to whom that name had been originally given; "they held, that Christ was born of a virgin, and was also in a *certain manner* united to the divine nature; they refused to abandon the ceremonies prescribed by the law of Moses, but were far from attempting to impose the observance of these ceremonies upon the Gentile Christians; they rejected also all those additions that were made to the Mosaic institutions by the pharisees and the doctors of the law;"^g and from hence we may easily see the reason why the greatest part of the Christians treated the Nazarenes with a more than ordinary degree of gentleness and forbearance.

III. It is a doubtful matter from whence the Ebionites derived their name, whether from that of some of their principal doctors, or from their poverty.^h

Ebionites,
their origin
doubtful.

One thing, however, is certain, and that is, that their sentiments and doctrines were much more pernicious than those of the Nazarenes.ⁱ For though they believed the celestial mission of Christ, and his participation of a divine nature, yet they regarded him as a man born of Joseph and Mary, according to the ordinary course of nature. They, moreover, asserted, that the ceremonial law, instituted by Moses, was not only obligatory upon the Jews, but also upon all others; and that the observance of it was essential to salvation. And as St. Paul had very different sentiments from them, concerning the obligation of the ceremonial law, and had opposed the observance of it in the warmest manner, so of consequence they held this apostle in abhorrence, and treated his writings with the utmost disrespect. Nor were they only attached to the rites instituted by Moses; they went still further, and received, with an equal degree of veneration, the superstitions of their ancestors, and the ceremonies and traditions which the Pharisees presumptuously added to the law.^k

^g See Mich. le Quien, *Adnot. ad Damascenum*, tom. i. p. 82, 83; as also a dissertation of the same author, *De Nazarenis et eorum fide*, which is the seventh of those that he has subjoined to his edition of the works of *Damascenus*.

^h See Fabric. *ad Philostr. de Hæresibus*, p. 81; as also Ittigius, *De Hæresibus, ævi Apostolici*.

ⁱ The learned Mr. Jones looked upon these two sects as differing very little from one another. He attributes to them both much the same doctrines, and alleges that the Ebionites had only made some small additions to the old Nazarene system. See the *New and full method of settling the Canonical Authority of the New Testament*, vol. i. p. 385.

^k Irenæus, lib. i. *Contra Hæres.* cap. xxvi. p. 105, edit. Massueti. Epiphanius gives a large account of the Ebionites, *Hæres.* xxx. But he deserves little credit, since he

iv. These obscure and unfrequented heretical assemblies were very little detrimental to the Christian cause, which suffered much more from those sects, whose leaders explained the doctrines of Christianity in a manner conformable to the dictates of the oriental philosophy concerning the origin of evil. The oriental doctors, who, before this century had lived in the greatest obscurity, came forth from their retreat under the reign of Adrian,¹ exposed themselves to public view, and gathered together, in various provinces, assemblies, whose numbers were very considerable. The ancient records mention a great number of these demi-christian sects, many of which are no further known than by their distinguishing names, which, perhaps, is the only circumstance in which they differ from each other. One division, however, of these oriental Christians, may be considered as real and important, since the two branches it produced were vastly superior to the rest in reputation, and made more noise in the world, than the other multiplied subdivisions of this pernicious sect. Of this famous division, one branch, which arose in Asia, preserved the oriental doctrine concerning the origin of the world, unmixed with other sentiments and opinions; while the other, which was formed in Egypt, made a motley mixture of this philosophy with the tenets and prodigies adopted in the religious system of that superstitious country. The doctrine of the former surpassed in simplicity and perspicuity that of the latter, which consisted of a vast variety of parts, so artfully combined, that the explication of them became a matter of much difficulty.

Sects that arose from the oriental philosophy.

The Asiatics.

v. Among the doctors of the Asiatic branch, the first place is due to Elxai, a Jew, who, during the reign of Trajan, is said to have formed the sect of the Elcesaites. This heretic, though a Jew, attached to the worship of one God, and full of veneration for Moses, corrupted, nevertheless, the religion of his ancestors, by blending with it a multitude of fictions drawn from the oriental philosophy; pretending also, after the example of the Essenes, to give a rational explication of the law of

Elxai and his followers.

confesses, § 3, p. 127, and § 4, p. 141, that he had confounded the Sampsæans and Elcesaites with the Ebionites, and also acknowledges, that the first Ebionites were strangers to the errors with which he charges them.

¹ Clemens Alex. *Stromat.* lib. viii. cap. xvii. p. 398. Cyprianus, *epist.* lxxv.

Moses, he reduced it to a mere allegory. It is, at the same time, proper to observe, that some have doubted, whether the Elcesaites are to be reckoned among the Christian or the Jewish sects ; and Epiphanius, who was acquainted with a certain production of Elxai, expresses his uncertainty in this matter. Elxai, indeed, in that book, mentions Christ with the highest encomiums, without, however, adding any circumstance from whence it might be concluded with certainty, that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ of whom he spoke.^m

VI. If then Elxai be improperly placed among the leaders of the sect now under consideration, we may place at its head Saturninus of Antioch, who is one of the first gnostic chiefs mentioned in history. He held the doctrine of *two principles* from whence proceeded all things ; the one *a wise and benevolent deity* ; and the other, *matter, a principle essentially evil*, and which he supposed under the superintendence of a certain intelligence of a malignant nature. “The world and its first inhabitants were, according to the system of this raving philosopher, created by seven angels, which presided over the seven planets. This work was carried on without the knowledge of the *benevolent deity*, and in opposition to the will of the *material principle*. The former, however, beheld it with approbation, and honoured it with several marks of his beneficence. He endowed with rational souls the beings who inhabited this new system, to whom their creators had imparted nothing more than the mere animal life ; and having divided the world into seven parts, he distributed them among the seven *angelic architects*, one of whom was the god of the Jews ; and reserved to himself the supreme empire over all. To these creatures, whom the *benevolent principle* had endowed with reasonable souls, and with dispositions that led to goodness and virtue, the *evil being*, to maintain his empire, added another kind, whom he formed of a wicked and malignant character ; and hence the difference we see among men. When the creators of the world fell from their allegiance to the Supreme Deity, God sent from heaven into our globe, a *Restorer of order*, whose name was Christ. This divine Conqueror came clothed with a corporeal appearance,

^m Euseb. *Hist. Eccles.* lib. vi. cap. xxxviii. p. 234. Epiphanius *Hæres.* xix. § 3, p. 41. Theodoretus, *Fabul. Hæret.* lib. ii. cap. vii. p. 221.

but not with a *real* body ; he came to destroy the empire of the *material principle*, and to point out to virtuous souls the way by which they must return to God. This way is beset with difficulties and sufferings ; since those souls who propose returning to the Supreme Being after the dissolution of this mortal body, must abstain from wine, flesh, wedlock, and, in short, from every thing that tends to sensual gratification, or even bodily refreshment." Saturninus taught these extravagant doctrines in Syria, but principally at Antioch, and drew after him many disciples by the pompous appearance of an extraordinary virtue."

VII. Cerdo the Syrian, and Marcion, son to the bishop of Pontus, belong to the Asiatic sect, though they began to establish their doctrine at Rome, and having given a turn somewhat different to the oriental superstition, may themselves be considered as the heads of a new sect which bears their names. Amid the obscurity and doubts that render so uncertain the history of these two men, the following fact is incontestable, viz. that Cerdo had been spreading his doctrine at Rome before the arrival of Marcion there ; and that the latter having, through his own misconduct, forfeited a place to which he aspired in the church of Rome, attached himself, through resentment, to the impostor Cerdo, and propagated his impious doctrines with an astonishing success throughout the world. "After the example of the oriental doctors, they held the existence of *two principles*, the one perfectly *good*, and the other perfectly *evil*. Between these, they imagined an *intermediate kind of deity*, neither perfectly good nor perfectly evil, but of a *mixed nature*, so Marcion expresses it, and so far just and powerful, as to administer rewards and inflict punishments. This *middle deity* is the creator of this inferior world, and the *god and legislator of the Jewish nation* ; he wages perpetual war with the *evil principle* ; and both the one and the other aspire to the place of the Supreme Being, and ambitiously attempt subjecting to their authority all the inhabitants of the world. The Jews are the subjects of that powerful *genius* who formed this globe ; the other nations, who worship a variety of gods, are under the empire of the *evil principle*. Both these

Cerdo. Marcion.

conflicting powers exercise oppressions upon rational and immortal souls, and keep them in a tedious and miserable captivity. Therefore the Supreme God, in order to terminate this war, and to deliver from their bondage those souls whose origin is celestial and divine, sent to the Jews a *being* most like unto himself, even his son Jesus Christ, clothed with a certain shadowy resemblance of a body, that thus he might be visible to mortal eyes. The commission of this celestial Messenger was to destroy the empire both of the *evil principle*, and of the *author of this world*, and to bring back wandering souls to God. On this account, he was attacked, with inexpressible violence and fury by the *prince of darkness*, and by the *god of the Jews*, but without effect, since, having a body only in appearance, he was thereby rendered incapable of suffering. Those who follow the sacred directions of this celestial Conductor, mortify the body by fastings and austerities, call off their minds from the allurements of sense, and, renouncing the precepts of the god of the Jews, and of the prince of darkness, turn their eyes toward the Supreme Being, shall, after death, ascend to the mansions of felicity and perfection." In consequence of all this, the rule of manners, which Marcion prescribed to his followers, was excessively austere, containing an express prohibition of wedlock, of the use of wine, flesh, and of all the external comforts of life. Notwithstanding the rigour of this severe discipline, great numbers embraced the doctrines of Marcion, of whom Lucan, or Lucian, Severus, Biastes, and principally Appelles, are said to have varied, in some things, from the opinions of their master, and to have formed new sects.^o

VIII. Bardesanes and Tatian are commonly supposed to have been of the school of Valentine the Egyptian. But this notion is entirely without foundation, since their doctrine differs in many things from that of the Valentinians, approaching nearer to that of the oriental philosophy concerning the *two principles*. Bardesanes, native of Edessa, was a man of a very acute genius, and acquired a shining reputation by his writings, which were in great number, and valuable for the profound erudition they con-

^o See Irenæus, Epiphanius, and particularly Tertullian's *Five Books against the Marcionites*, with his *Poem against Marcion*, and the *Dialogue against the Marcionites*, which is generally ascribed to Origen. See also Tillemont's *Memoires*, and Beausobre's *Histoire du Manichéisme*, tom. ii. p. 69.

tained. Seduced by the fantastic charms of the oriental philosophy, he adopted it with zeal, but, at the same time, with certain modifications, that rendered his system less extravagant than that of the Marcionites, against whom he wrote a very learned treatise. The sum of his doctrine is as follows: "there is a Supreme God, pure and benevolent, absolutely free from all evil and imperfection; and there is also a *prince of darkness*, the fountain of all evil, disorder, and misery. The Supreme God created the world without any mixture of evil in its composition; he gave existence also to its inhabitants, who came out of his forming hand, pure and incorrupt, endued with subtle, ethereal bodies, and spirits of a celestial nature. But when, in process of time, *the prince of darkness* had enticed men to sin, then the Supreme God permitted them to fall into sluggish and gross bodies, formed of corrupt matter by the *evil principle*; he permitted also the depravation and disorder which this malignant being introduced both into the natural and the moral world, designing, by this permission, to punish the degeneracy and rebellion of an apostate race; and hence proceeds the perpetual conflict between reason and passion in the mind of man. It was on this account, that Jesus descended from the upper regions, clothed not with a real, but with a celestial and aerial body, and taught mankind to subdue that body of corruption which they carry about with them in this mortal life; and, by *abstinence, fasting, and contemplation*, to disengage themselves from the servitude and dominion of that *malignant matter*, which chained down the soul to low and ignoble pursuits. Those, who hear the voice of this divine Instructor, and submit themselves to his discipline, shall, after the dissolution of this terrestrial body, mount up to the mansions of felicity, clothed with ethereal vehicles or celestial bodies." Such was the doctrine of Bardesanes, who afterward abandoned the chimerical part of this system, and returned to a better mind; though his sect subsisted a long time in Syria.^p

ix. Tatian, by birth an Assyrian, and a disciple of Justin Martyr, is more distinguished, by the ancient writers, on account of his genius and learning, and the ex-

Tatian.

^p See the writers that give accounts of the ancient heresies, as also Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.* lib. iv. cap. xxx. p. 151. Origen, *Dial. contra Marcionitas*, § 3, p. 70, edit. Wetstenii. Frid. Strunzii, *Hist. Bardesanis*, &c. Beausobre, *Hist. du Manich.* vol. ii. p. 128.

cessive and incredible austerity of his life and manners, than by any remarkable errors or opinions which he taught his followers. It appears, however, from the testimony of credible writers, that Tatian looked upon *matter* as the fountain of all evil, and therefore recommended, in a particular manner, the mortification of the body; that he distinguished the creator of the world from the Supreme Being; denied the reality of Christ's body; and corrupted the Christian religion with several other tenets of the oriental philosophy. He had a great number of followers, who were, after him, called Tatianists,^q but were, nevertheless, more frequently distinguished from other sects by names relative to the austerity of their manners. For as they rejected, with a sort of horror, all the comforts and conveniences of life, and abstained from wine with such a rigorous obstinacy, as to use nothing but water even at the celebration of the Lord's supper; as they macerated their bodies by continual fastings, and lived a severe life of celibacy and abstinence, so they were called Encratites,* Hydroparastates,† and Apotactites.‡

x. Hitherto, we have only considered the doctrine of the Asiatic gnostics. Those of the Egyptian branch differ from them in general in this, that they blended into one mass the oriental philosophy and the Egyptian theology; the former of which the Asiatics preserved unmixed in its original simplicity. The Egyptians were, moreover, particularly distinguished from the Asiatic gnostics, by the following difference in their religious system, viz. 1. That though, beside the existence of a *deity*, they maintained that also of an *eternal matter*, endued with life and motion, yet they did not acknowledge an *eternal principle of darkness*, or the evil principle of the Persians. 2. They supposed that our blessed Saviour was a compound of two persons, of the man Jesus, and of Christ the Son of God; that the divine nature entered into the man Jesus, when he was baptized by John in the river Jordan, and departed from him when he was seized by the Jews. 3. They attributed to Christ a real, not an imaginary body;

^q We have yet remaining of the writings of Tatian, an *Oration* addressed to the Greeks. As to his opinions, they may be gathered from Clemens Alexandrinus, *Stromat.* lib. iii. p. 460. Epiphanius, *Hæres.* xlii. cap. i. p. 391. Origen, *De oratione*, cap. xiii. p. 77, of the Oxford edition. None, however, of the ancients have written professedly concerning the doctrines of Tatian.

* Or temperate.

† Or drinkers of water.

‡ Renouncers.

The peculiar sentiments of the Egyptian gnostics.

though it must be confessed, that they were much divided in their sentiments on this head. 4. Their discipline, with respect to life and manners, was much less severe than those of the Asiatic sect, and seems, in some points, to have been favourable to the corruption and passions of men.

XI. Basilides has generally obtained the first place among the Egyptian gnostics. “He acknowledged the existence of one Supreme God, perfect in good-^{Basilides.}ness and wisdom, who produced from his own substance seven beings, or æons, of a most excellent nature. Two of these æons, called *Dynamis* and *Sophia*, i. e. *power* and *wisdom*, engendered the angels of the highest order. These angels formed a heaven for their habitation, and brought forth other angelic beings, of a nature somewhat inferior to their own. Many other generations of angels followed these, new heavens were also created, until the number of angelic orders, and of their respective heavens, amounted to *three hundred and sixty-five*, and thus equalled the days of the year. All these are under the empire of an omnipotent Lord, whom Basilides called *Abraxas*.” This word, which was certainly in use among the Egyptians before his time, contains numeral letters to the amount of 365, and thereby expresses the number of heavens and angelic orders above mentioned.” “The inhabitants of the lowest heavens, which touched upon the borders of the

r We have remaining a great number of gems, and receive more from Egypt from time to time, on which, beside other figures of Egyptian taste, we find the word *Abraxas* engraved. See, for this purpose, a work entitled, *Macarii Abraxas, seu de gemmis Basilidianis disquisitio*, which was published at Antwerp, with several improvements, by Jo. Chiffletius, in 4to. in 1657. See also Montfaucon, *Palæograph. Græc.* lib. ii. cap. viii. p. 177. All these gems are supposed to come from Basilides, and therefore bear his name. Most of them, however, contain the marks of a superstition too gross to be attributed even to a half Christian, and bear also emblematic characters of the Egyptian theology. It is not, therefore, just to attribute them all to Basilides, who, though erroneous in many of his opinions, was yet a follower of Christ, but such of them only as carry some mark of the Christian doctrine and discipline. There is no doubt, but that the old Egyptian word *Abraxas* was appropriated to the governor or lord of the heavens, and that Basilides, having learned it from the philosophy of his nation, retained it in his religious system. See Beausobre, *Hist. du Manichéisme*, vol. ii. p. 51, and also Jo. Bapt. Passeri, in his *Dissert. de gemmis Basilidianis*, which makes a part of that splendid work which he published at Florence, 1750, *De Gemmis stelliferis*, tom. ii. p. 221. See also the sentiments of the learned Jablonski, concerning the signification of the word *Abraxas* as they are delivered in a dissertation inserted in the seventh volume of the *Miscell. Leips. Nova*. Passerius affirms, that none of these gems relate to Basilides, but that they concern only magicians, i. e. sorcerers, fortunetellers, and such like adventurers. Here, however, this learned man seems to go too far, since he himself acknowledges, p. 225, that *he had sometimes found on these gems, vestiges of the errors of Basilides*. These famous monuments stand yet in need of an interpreter, but of such a one as can join circumspection to diligence and erudition.

eternal, malignant, and self-animated *matter*, conceived the design of forming a world from that confused mass, and of creating an order of beings to people it. This design was carried into execution, and was approved by the Supreme God, who, to the animal life, with which only the inhabitants of this new world were at first endowed, added a reasonable soul, giving at the same time, to the angels, the empire over them."

XII. "These angelic beings, advanced to the government of the world which they had created, fell, by degrees, from their original purity, and manifested soon the fatal marks of their depravity and corruption. They not only endeavoured to efface in the minds of men the knowledge of the Supreme Being, that they might be worshipped in his stead, but also began to war against one another, with an ambitious view to enlarge, every one, the bounds of his respective dominion. The most arrogant and turbulent of all these angelic spirits, was that which presided over the Jewish nation. Hence the Supreme God, beholding with compassion the miserable state of rational beings, who groaned under the contests of these jarring powers, sent from heaven his son Nus, or Christ, the chief of the *æons*, that, joined in a substantial union with the man Jesus, he might restore the knowledge of the Supreme God, destroy the empire of those angelic natures which presided over the world, and particularly that of the arrogant leader of the Jewish people. The god of the Jews, alarmed at this, sent forth his ministers to seize the man Jesus, and put him to death. They executed his commands, but their cruelty could not extend to Christ, against whom their efforts were vain.^s Those souls, who obey the precepts of the Son of God, shall, after the dissolution of their mortal frame, ascend to the Father, while their bodies return to the corrupt mass of matter from whence they were formed. Disobedient spirits, on the contrary, shall pass successively into other bodies."

^s Many of the ancients have, upon the authority of Irenæus, accused Basilides of denying the reality of Christ's body, and of maintaining that Simon the Cyrenian was crucified in his stead. But this accusation is entirely groundless, as may be seen by consulting the *Commentar. de rebus Christian. ante Constant.* p. 354, &c. &c. where it is demonstrated, that Basilides considered the divine *Æ*-viour as compounded of the man Jesus, and Christ the Son of God. It may be indeed, that some of the disciples of Basilides entertained the opinion that is here unjustly attributed to their master.

XIII. The doctrine of Basilides, in point of morals, if we may credit the account of most ancient writers, was favourable to the lusts and passions of mankind, and permitted the practice of all sorts of wickedness. But those, whose testimonies are the most worthy of regard, give a quite different account of this teacher, and represent him as recommending the practice of virtue and piety in the strongest manner, and as having condemned not only the actual commission of iniquity, but even every inward propensity of the mind to a vicious conduct. It is true, there were, in his precepts relating to the conduct of life, some things which gave great offence to all true Christians. For he affirmed it to be lawful for them to conceal their religion, to deny Christ, when their lives were in danger, and to partake of the feasts of the Gentiles that were instituted in consequence of the sacrifices offered to idols. He endeavoured also to diminish the glory of those who suffered martyrdom for the cause of Christ; impiously maintained, that they were more heinous sinners than others, and that their sufferings were to be looked upon as a punishment inflicted upon them by the divine justice. Though he was led into this enormous error, by an absurd notion that all the calamities of this life were of a penal nature, and that men never suffered but in consequence of their iniquities, yet this rendered his principles greatly suspected, and the irregular lives of some of his disciples seemed to justify the unfavourable opinion that was entertained concerning their master.

The moral
doctrine of
Basilides.

XIV. But whatever may be said of Basilides, it is certain, that he was far surpassed in impiety by Carpocrates, who was also of Alexandria, and who carried the gnostic blasphemies to a more enormous degree of extravagance than they had ever been brought by any of that sect. His philosophical tenets agree, in general, with those of the Egyptian gnostics. He acknowledged the existence of a Supreme God, and of the *æons* derived from him by successive generations. He maintained the eternity of a *corrupt matter*, and the creation of the world from thence by angelic powers, as also the divine origin of souls unhappily imprisoned in mortal bodies, &c. But, beside these, he propagated other sentiments and maxims

Carpocrates.

t For a further account of Basilides, the reader may consult Ren. Massuet, *Dissert. in Irenæum*, and Beausobre, *Hist. du Manichéisme*, vol. ii. p. 8.

of a horrid kind. He asserted that Jesus was born of Joseph and Mary, according to the ordinary course of nature, and was distinguished from the rest of mankind by nothing but his superior fortitude and greatness of soul. His doctrine also, with respect to practice, was licentious in the highest degree; for he not only allowed his disciples a full liberty to sin, but recommended to them a vicious course of life, as a matter both of obligation and necessity; asserting, that eternal salvation was only attainable by those who had committed all sorts of crimes, and had daringly filled up the measure of iniquity. It is almost incredible, that one who maintained the existence of a Supreme Being, who acknowledged Christ as the Saviour of mankind, could entertain such monstrous opinions as these. One would infer, indeed, from certain tenets of Carpocrates, that he adopted the common doctrine of the gnostics concerning Christ, and acknowledged also the laws which this divine Saviour imposed upon his disciples. But notwithstanding this, it is beyond all doubt, that the precepts and opinions of this gnostic are full of impiety; since he held, that lusts and passions, being implanted in our nature by God himself, were consequently void of guilt, and had nothing criminal in them; that all actions were indifferent in their own nature, and were rendered good or evil only by the opinions of men, or by the laws of the state; that it was the will of God, that all things should be possessed in common, the female sex not excepted; but that human laws, by an arbitrary tyranny, branded those as robbers, and adulterers, who only used their natural rights. It is easy to perceive, that, by these tenets, all the principles of virtue were destroyed, and a door opened to the most horrid licentiousness, and to the most profligate and enormous wickedness."

xv. Valentine, who was likewise an Egyptian by birth, was eminently distinguished from all his brethren by the extent of his fame, and the multitude of his followers. His sect, which took rise at Rome, grew up to a state of consistence and vigour in the isle of Cyprus, and spread itself through Asia, Africa, and Europe, with an amazing rapidity. The principles of Valentine were, generally speaking, the same with those of the gnostics,

Valentine.

whose name he assumed, yet in many things he entertained opinions that were particular to himself. "He placed, for instance, in the *pleroma*, so the gnostics called the habitation of the deity, thirty *æons*, of which the one half were male, and the other female. To these he added four others, which were of neither sex, viz. *Horus*, who guarded the borders of the *pleroma*, *Christ*, the *Holy Ghost* and *Jesus*. The youngest of the *æons*, called *Sophia*, i. e. wisdom, conceived an ardent desire of comprehending the nature of the Supreme Being, and, by the force of this propensity, brought forth a daughter, named *Achamoth*. *Achamoth*, being exiled from the *pleroma*, fell down into the rude and undigested mass of matter, to which she gave a certain arrangement; and, by the assistance of *Jesus*, produced the *demiurge*, the lord and creator of all things. This *demiurge* separated the subtile or *animal* matter from that of the grosser, or more *terrestrial* kind; out of the former he created the superior world, or the visible heavens; and out of the latter he formed the inferior world, or this terraqueous globe. He also made man, in whose composition the subtile and also the grosser matter were both united, and that in equal portions; but *Achamoth*, the mother of *demiurge*, added to these two substances, of which the human race was formed, a *spiritual and celestial substance*." This is the sum of that intricate and tedious fable, that the extravagant brain of *Valentine* imposed upon the world for a system of religious philosophy; and from this it appears, that, though he explained the origin of the world and of the human race in a more subtile manner than the other gnostics, yet he did not differ from them in reality. His imagination was more wild and inventive than that of his brethren; and this is manifest in the whole of his doctrine, which is no more than gnosticism, set out with some supernumerary fringes, as will further appear from what follows.

XVI. "The creator of this world, according to *Valentine*, arrived, by degrees, to that pitch of arrogance, that he either imagined himself to be God alone, or, at least, was desirous that mankind should consider him as such. For this purpose, he sent forth prophets to the Jewish nation, to declare his claim to the honour that is due to the Supreme Being, and in this also the other angels that preside over the different parts of the

His idle
dreams.

universe immediately set themselves to imitate his ambition. To chastise this lawless arrogance of *demiurge*, and to illuminate the minds of rational beings with the knowledge of the true and Supreme deity, Christ appeared upon earth, composed of an animal and spiritual substance, and clothed, moreover, with an aerial body. This Redeemer, in descending upon earth, passed through the womb of Mary, as the pure water flows through the untainted conduit. Jesus, one of the supreme *æons*, was substantially united to him, when he was baptized by John in the waters of Jordan. The creator of this world, when he perceived that the foundations of his empire were shaken by this divine man, caused him to be apprehended and nailed to the cross. But before Christ submitted to this punishment, not only Jesus the Son of God, but also the rational soul of Christ, ascended up on high, so that only the animal soul and the etherial body suffered crucifixion. Those who, abandoning the service of false deities, and the worship of the god of the Jews, live according to the precepts of Christ, and submit the animal and sensual soul to the discipline of reason, shall be truly happy; their rational and also their sensual souls shall ascend to those glorious seats of bliss which border on the *pleroma*; and when all the parts of the divine nature, or all souls are purified thoroughly and separated from *matter*, then a raging fire, let loose from its prison, shall spread its flames throughout the universe, and dissolve the frame of this corporeal world." Such is the doctrine of Valentine and the gnostics; such also are the tenets of the oriental philosophy, and they may be summed up in the following propositions; *this world is a compound of good and evil. Whatever is good in it, comes down from the Supreme God the Father of lights, and to him it shall return; and then the world shall be entirely destroyed.*"

It is proper to observe, for the information of those who desire a more copious account of the Valentinian heresy, that almost all the ancient writers have written upon this subject, especially Irenæus, *Libro primo contra Hæreses*. Tertullian, in a particular treatise upon that matter; Clemens Alex. &c. Among the moderns, see Jo. Franc. Buddæus. *Dissert. de hæresi Valentiniana*, in his introduction to his history of the Hebrew philosophers, which dissertation gave occasion to many disputes concerning the origin of this heresy. Some of the moderns have endeavoured to reconcile, with reason, this obscure and absurd doctrine of the Valentinians. See, for this purpose, the following authors; Souverain *Platonisme dévoilé*, ch. viii. p. 68. Camp. Vitringa, *Observ. Sacæ*, lib. i. cap. ii. p. 131. Beausobre, *Histoire du Manichéisme*, p. 548. Jac. Basnage, *Hist. des Juifs*, tom. iii. p. 729. Petr. Faydit, *Eclaircissemens sur l'Hist. Ecclesiast. des deux premiers Siècles*. How vain all such endeavours are, might easily be shown; nay, Valentine himself has determined the matter, by acknowledging that his doctrine is absolutely and entirely different from that of other Christians.

XVII. We learn from ancient writers, that the sect of the Valentinians was divided into many branches. One of these was the sect of Ptolemites, so called from their chief Ptolemy, who differed in opinion from his master Valentine, with respect both to the number and nature of the *æons*. Another of these was the sect of the Secundians, whose chief Secundus, one of the principal followers of Valentine, maintained the doctrine of two eternal principles, viz. *light* and *darkness*, from whence arose the good and the evil that are observable in the universe. From the same source arose the sect of Heracleon, from whose writings Clemens and Origen have made many extracts; as also that of the Marcosians, whose leaders Marc and Colobarsus added many absurd fictions to those of Valentine; though it is certain, at the same time, that many errors were attributed to them, which they did not maintain.* I omit the mention of some other sects, to which the Valentinian heresy is said to have given rise. Whether, in reality, they all sprung from this source, is a question of a very doubtful kind, especially if we consider the errors into which the ancients have fallen, in tracing out the origin of the various sects that divided the church.†

Various sects of the Valentinians.

The greater.

XVIII. It is not necessary to take any particular notice of the more obscure and less considerable of the gnostic sects, of which the ancient writers scarcely mention any thing but the name, and one or two of their distinguishing tenets. Such were the Adamites, who are said to have professed an exact imitation of the primitive state of innocence; the Cainites, who treated as saints, with the utmost marks of admiration and respect, Cain, Korah, Dathan, the inhabitants of Sodom, and even the traitor Judas. Such also were the Abelites, who entered into the bonds of matrimony, but neglected to fulfil its principal end, even the procreation of offspring; the Sethites, who honoured Seth in a particular manner, and look-

The less considerable.

☞ x Marc did not certainly entertain all the opinions that are attributed to him. Those, however, which we are certain that he adopted, are sufficient to convince us that he was out of his senses. He maintained, among other crude fancies, that the *plenitude* and *perfection* of truth resided in the Greek *alphabet*: and alleges that, as the reason why Jesus Christ was called the *Alpha* and the *Omega*.

y Concerning these sects, the reader will find something fuller in Irenæus, and the other ancient writers; and a yet more learned and satisfactory account in Grabe's *Spicilegium Patr. et Hæreticor.* § 2, p. 69, 82. There is an ample account of the Marcosians in Irenæus, *Contr. Hær.* lib. i. cap. xiv. p. 70.

ed upon him as the same person with Christ ; the 'Florinians, who had Florinus and Blastus for their chiefs,' and several others. It is highly probable, that the ancient doctors, deceived by the variety of names that distinguished the heretics, may with too much precipitation have divided one sect into many ; nay, it may be further questioned, whether they have, at all times, represented accurately the nature and true meaning of several opinions concerning which they have written.

XIX. The Ophites, or Serpentinians, a ridiculous sort of heretics, who had for their leader a man called Ophites. Euphrates, deserve not the lowest place among the Egyptian gnostics. This sect, which had its origin among the Jews, was of a more ancient date than the Christian religion. A part of its followers embraced the gospel, while the other retained their primitive superstition, and from hence arose the division of the Ophites into Christian and antichristian. The Christian Ophites entertained almost the same fantastic opinions that were held by the other Egyptian gnostics, concerning the *æons*, the *eternal matter*, the *creation of the world* in opposition to the will of God, the *rulers of the seven planets* that presided over this world, the *tyranny of demiurge*, and also concerning Christ united to the man Jesus, in order to destroy the empire of this usurper. But beside these, they maintained the following particular tenet, from whence also they received the name of Ophites, viz. "that the *serpent*, by which our first parents were deceived, was either Christ himself, or *Sophia*, concealed under the form of that animal ;" and in consequence of this opinion, they are said to have nourished a certain number of serpents, which they looked upon as sacred, and to which they offered a sort of worship, a subordinate kind of divine honours. It was no difficult matter for those, who made a distinction between the Supreme Being and the creator of the world, and who looked upon every thing as divine, which was in opposition to *demiurge*, to fall into these extravagant notions.

[F z Here Dr. Mosheim has fallen into a slight inaccuracy, in confounding the opinions of these two heretics ; since it is certain, that Blastus was for restoring the Jewish religion, and celebrated the passover on the fourteenth day ; whereas Florinus was a Valentinian, and maintained the doctrine of the *two principles*, with other gnostic errors.

xx. The schisms and commotions that arose in the church, from a mixture of the oriental and Egyptian philosophy with the Christian religion, were, in the second century, increased by those Grecian philosophers who embraced the doctrine of Christ. The Christian doctrine, concerning the *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*, and the *two natures* united in our blessed Saviour, were, by no means, reconcileable with the tenets of the sages and doctors of Greece, who therefore endeavoured to explain them in such a manner as to render them comprehensible. Praxeas, a man of genius and learning, began to propagate these explications at Rome, and was severely persecuted for the errors they contained. He denied any *real* distinction between the *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*, and maintained that the *Father*, sole creator of all things, had united to himself the *human nature* of Christ. Hence his followers were called Monarchians, because of their denying a plurality of persons in the Deity; and also Patropassians, because, according to Tertullian's account, they believed that the Father was so intimately united with the man Christ, his Son, that he suffered with him the anguish of an afflicted life, and the torments of an ignominious death. However ready many may have been to embrace this erroneous doctrine, it does not appear that this sect formed themselves a separate place of worship, or removed themselves from the ordinary assemblies of Christians.^a

Monarchians
and Patro-
passians.

xxi. An opinion highly resembling that now mentioned was, about the same time, professed at Rome by Theodotus, who, though a tanner, was a man of profound learning, and also by Artemas, or Artemon, from whom the sect of the Artemonites derived their origin. The accounts given of these two persons, by the ancient writers, are not only few in number, but are also extremely ambiguous and obscure. Their sentiments, however, as far as they can be collected from the best records, amount to this; "that, at the birth of the man Christ, a certain *divine energy*, or portion of the divine nature, and not the *person* of the Father, as Praxeas imagined, united itself to him."

Theodotus.
Artemon.

It is impossible to decide with any degree of certainty which of the two was the most ancient, Theodotus, or Arte-

^a Tertulliani, *Lib. contra Praxeam*; as also Petri Wesselingii *Probabilia*, cap. xxvi. p. 223.

mon; as also whether they both taught the same doctrine, or differed in their opinions. One thing, indeed is certain, and that is, that the disciples of both applied the dictates of philosophy, and even the science of geometry, to the explication of the Christian doctrine.

xxii. A like attachment to the dictates of a presumptuous philosophy, induced Hermogenes, a painter by profession, to abandon the doctrine of Christianity concerning the origin of the world and the nature of the soul, and thus to raise new troubles in the church. Regarding *matter* as the fountain of all evil, he could not persuade himself that God had created it from nothing, by an almighty act of his will; and therefore he maintained, that the world, with whatever it contains, as also the souls of men, and other spirits, were formed by the Deity from an uncreated and eternal mass of corrupt *matter*. In this doctrine there were many intricate things, and it manifestly jarred with the opinions commonly received among Christians relative to that difficult and almost unsearchable subject. How Hermogenes explained those doctrines of Christianity, which opposed his system, neither Tertullian, who refuted it, nor any of the ancient writers inform us.^b

xxiii. These sects, which we have now been passing in review, may be justly regarded as the offspring of philosophy. But they were succeeded by one in which ignorance reigned, and which was the mortal enemy of philosophy and letters. It was formed by Montanus, an obscure man, without any capacity or strength of judgment, and who lived in a Phrygian village called Pepuza. This weak man was foolish and extravagant enough to take it into his head, that he was the *paraclete*, or Comforter,^c which the divine Saviour, at his departure

^b There is yet extant a book written by Tertullian against Hermogenes, in which the opinions of the latter, concerning *matter*, and the origin of the world, are warmly opposed. We have lost another work of the same author, in which he refuted the notion of Hermogenes concerning the soul.

^c Those are undoubtedly mistaken, who have asserted that Montanus gave himself out for the *Holy Ghost*. However weak he may have been in point of capacity, he was not fool enough to push his pretensions so far. Neither have they, who inform us that Montanus pretended to have received from above the same *spirit* or *paraclete*, which formerly animated the apostles, interpreted with accuracy the meaning of this heretic. It is, therefore, necessary to observe here, that Montanus made a distinction between the *paraclete*, promised by Christ to his apostles, and the *Holy Spirit*, that was shed upon them on the day of pentecost; and understood, by the former, a divine teacher pointed out by Christ under the name of *paraclete*, or comforter, who was to perfect the gospel by the addition of some doctrines omitted by our Saviour, and to cast a full light upon others which were expressed in an obscure and imperfect manner, though for wise reasons which

from the earth, promised to send to his disciples to lead them to all truth. He made no attempts upon the peculiar doctrines of Christianity, but only declared, that he was sent with a divine commission, to give to the moral precepts delivered by Christ and his apostles the finishing *touch* that was to bring them to perfection. He was of opinion, that Christ and his apostles made, in their precepts, many allowances to the infirmities of those among whom they lived, and that this condescending indulgence rendered their system of moral laws imperfect and incomplete. He therefore added to the laws of the gospel many austere decisions; inculcated the necessity of multiplying fasts; prohibited second marriages as unlawful; maintained that the church should refuse absolution to those who had fallen into the commission of enormous sins; and condemned all care of the body, especially all nicety in dress, and all female ornaments. The excessive austerity of this ignorant fanatic did not stop here; he showed the same aversion to the noblest employments of the mind, that he did to the innocent enjoyments of life; and gave it as his opinion, that philosophy, arts, and whatever savoured of polite literature, should be mercilessly banished from the Christian church. He looked upon those Christians as guilty of a most heinous transgression, who saved their lives by flight, from the persecuting sword, or who ransomed them, by money, from the hands of their cruel and mercenary judges. I might mention many other precepts of the same teacher, equally to these in severity and rigour.

xxiv. It was impossible to suffer, within the bounds of the church, an enthusiast, who gave himself out for a teacher; whose precepts were superior in sanctity to those of Christ himself, and who imposed his austere discipline upon Christians, as enjoined, by a divine authority, and dictated by the oracle of celestial

The success
of Montanus
and his doc-
trine.

subsisted during the ministry of Christ; and, indeed, Montanus was not the only person that made this distinction. Other Christian doctors were of opinion, that the *paraclete*, promised by Jesus to his disciples, was a divine ambassador, entirely distinct from the Holy Ghost, which was shed upon the apostles. In the third century, Manes interpreted the promise of Christ in this manner. He pretended, moreover, that he himself was the *paraclete*; and that, in his person, the prediction was fulfilled. Every one knows, that Mahomet entertained the same notion, and applied to himself the prediction of Christ, concerning the coming of the *paraclete*. It was, therefore, this divine messenger that Montanus pretended to be, and not the Holy Ghost. This will appear, with the utmost evidence, to those who read with attention the account given of this matter by Tertullian, who was the most famous of all the disciples of Montanus, and the most perfectly acquainted with every point of his doctrine.

wisdom, which spoke to the world through him. Beside, his dismal predictions concerning the disasters that were to happen in the empire, and the approaching destruction of the Roman republic, were every way proper to render him obnoxious to the governing powers, and also to excite their resentment against the church, which nourished such an inauspicious prophet in its bosom. Montanus, therefore, first by a decree of certain assemblies, and afterward by the unanimous voice of the whole church, was solemnly separated from the body of the faithful. It is, however, certain, that the very severity of his doctrines gained him the esteem and confidence of many, who were far from being of the lowest order. The most eminent among these were Priscilla and Maximilla, ladies more remarkable for their opulence than for their virtue, and who fell with a high degree of warmth and zeal into the visions of their fanatical chief, prophesied like him, and imitated the pretended *paraclete* in all the variety of his extravagance and folly. Hence it became an easy matter for Montanus to erect a new church, which was also, in effect, first established at Pepuza, a town in Phrygia, and afterward spread abroad through Asia, Africa, and a part of Europe. The most eminent and learned of all the followers of this rigid enthusiast was Tertullian, a man of great learning and genius, but of an austere and melancholy natural temper. This great man, by adopting the sentiments of Montanus, and maintaining his cause with fortitude, and even vehemence, in a multitude of books written upon that occasion, has shown to the world a mortifying spectacle of the deviations of which human nature is capable, even in those in whom it seems to have approached the nearest to perfection.^d

^d For an account of the Montanists, see Euseb. *Eccl. History*, book v. ch. xvi. and in general all the writers ancient and modern, especially Tertullian, who have professedly written concerning the sects of the early ages. The learned Mr. Theophilus Wernsdorf published at Pantzick, in the year 1751, a most ingenious exposition of whatever regards the sect of the Montanists, under the following title, *Commentatio de Montanistis Sæculi Secundi, vulgo creditis Hæreticis*.

THE THIRD CENTURY.

PART I.

THE EXTERNAL HISTORY OF THE CHURCH.

CHAPTER I.

WHICH CONTAINS THE PROSPEROUS EVENTS THAT HAPPENED TO THE CHURCH DURING THIS CENTURY.

I THAT the Christians suffered, in this century, calamities and injuries of the most dreadful kind, is a matter that admits of no debate; nor was there, indeed, any period in which they were not exposed to perpetual dangers. For not to mention the fury of the people, set in motion, so often, by the craft and zeal of their licentious priests, the evil came from a higher source; the prætors and magistrates, notwithstanding the ancient laws of the emperors in favour of the Christians, had it in their power to pursue them with all sorts of vexations, as often as avarice, cruelty, or superstition roused up the infernal spirit of persecution in their breasts. At the same time, it is certain, that the rights and privileges of the Christians were multiplied, in this century, much more than many are apt to imagine. In the army, at court, and indeed, in all the orders of the nation, there was a considerable number of Christians, who lived entirely unmolested; and, what is still more, the profession of Christianity was no obstacle to public preferment under most of the emperors that reigned in this century. It is also certain, that the Christians had, in many places, houses where they assembled for the purposes of divine worship, and that with the knowledge and connivance of the emperors and magistrates. And though it be more than probable, that this liberty was, upon many occasions, and even for the most part, purchased at a high rate; yet it is manifest, that some of the emperors were very favourably inclined toward the Christians, and were far from having an aversion to their religion.

The rights and immunities of the Christians increased.

II. Caracalla, the son of Severus, was proclaimed emperor in the year 211, and during the six years of his government, he neither oppressed the Christians himself, nor permitted any others to treat them with cruelty or injustice. Heliogabalus also, though in other respects the most infamous of all princes,^a and perhaps the most odious of all mortals, showed no marks of bitterness or aversion to the disciples of Jesus. His successor Alexander Severus, who was a prince distinguished by a noble assemblage of the most excellent and illustrious virtues, did not, indeed, abrogate the laws that had been enacted against the Christians; and this is the reason why we have some examples of martyrdom under his administration. It is nevertheless certain, that he showed them, in many ways, and upon every occasion that was offered him, the most undoubted marks of benignity and favour; nay, he is said to have gone so far as to pay a certain sort of worship to the divine author of our religion.^b This his favourable inclination toward the Christians was probably owing, at first, to the instructions and counsels of his mother Julia Mammæa, for whom he had a high degree of love and veneration. Julia had very favourable sentiments of the Christian religion; and, being once at Antioch, sent for the famous Origen from Alexandria, in order to enjoy the pleasure and advantage of his conversation and instructions. Those who assert that Julia, and her son Alexander, embraced the Christian religion, are by no means, furnished with unexceptionable testimonies to confirm this fact; though we may affirm, with confidence, that this virtuous prince looked upon Christianity as meriting, beyond all other religions, toleration and favour from the state, and considered its author as worthy of a place among those who have been distinguished by their sublime virtues, and honoured with a commission from above.^c

III. Under Gordian the Christians lived in tranquillity. His successors the Philips, father and son, proved so favourable and even friendly to them, that these two emperors passed, in the opinion of ma-

Other emperors favourable to the Christians.

^a Lampridius, *Vita Elagabali*, c. iii. p. 796.

^b Lamprid. *De Vita Severi*, cap. xxix. p. 930. Vide Carol. Henr. Zeibichii, *Diss. de Christo ab Alexandro in larario cultu*, quæ extat in *Miscellan. Lips. nov.* tom. iii. p. 42.

^c Vide Frid. Spanhemii, *Diss. de Lucii, Britonum Regis, Julæ Mammææ, et Philipporum conversionibus*, tom. ii. opp. p. 400. Item Paul. Jablonski, *Diss. de Alexandro Severo sacris Christianis per Gnosticos initiato*, in *Miscellan. Lips. novis*, tom. iv. p. 56.

ny, for Christians ; and, indeed, the arguments alleged to prove that they embraced, though in a secret and clandestine manner, the religion of Jesus, seem to have a high degree of weight, and render this fact extremely probable. But as these arguments are opposed by others equally specious, that famous question, relating to the religion of Philip the Arabian, and his son, must be left undecided.^d Neither side offer reasons so victorious and unanswerable, as to produce a full and complete conviction ; and this is therefore one of those many cases, where a suspension of judgment is both allowable and wise. With respect to Gallienus, and some other emperors of this century, if they did not professedly favour the progress of Christianity, yet neither did they oppress its followers, nor retard its advancement.

Question concerning the religion of the emperor Philip.

iv. This clemency and benevolence, which the followers of Jesus experienced from great men, and especially from those of imperial dignity, must be placed, without doubt, among those human means that contributed to multiply the number of Christians, and to enlarge the bounds of the church. Other causes, however, both *divine* and *human*, must be added here, to render a complete and satisfactory account of this matter. Among the causes which belong to the first of these classes, we do not only reckon the intrinsic force of celestial truth, and the piety and fortitude of those who declared it to the world, but also that *especial* and *interposing Providence*, which, by dreams and visions, presented to the minds of many, who were either inattentive to the Christian doctrine, or its professed enemies, touched their hearts with a conviction of the truth, and a sense of its importance, and engaged them, without delay, to profess themselves the disciples of Christ.^e To this may also be added, the healing of diseases, and other miracles,

The number of Christians increased.

The causes thereof partly divine.

^d The authors of the Universal History have determined the question which Dr. Mosheim leaves here undecided ; and they think it may be affirmed, that Philip and his son embraced the Gospel, since that opinion is built upon such respectable authority as that of Jerom, Chrysostom, Dionysius of Alexandria, Zonaras, Nicephorus, Cedrenus, Ruffinus, Syncellus, Orosius, Jornandes, Ammianus, Marcellinus, the learned cardinal Bona, Vincentius Lirinensis, Huetius, and others. Dr. Mosheim refers his readers, for, an account of this matter, to the following writers : Spanheim. *De Christianismo Philipp.* tom. ii. opp. p. 400. Entretiens *Historiques sur le Christianisme de l'Empereur Philippe*, par P. De L. F. Mammachii *Origines et Antiq. Christianæ*, tom. ii. p. 252. Confer. Fabric. *De Luce Evang.* &c. p. 252.

^e See, for an account of this matter, the following authors : Origen, lib. i. *adv. Celsum*, p. 35. *Homil. in Luca* vii. p. 216, tom. ii. opp. edit. Basil ; as also Tertullian, *De Anima*, cap. xiv. p. 348, edit. Rigaltii, and Eusebius, *Histor. Eccles.* lib. vi. cap. v. p. 208.

which many Christians were yet enabled to perform by invoking the name of the divine Saviour.^d The number of miracles was, however, much less in this than the preceding century; nor must this alteration be attributed only to the divine wisdom, which rendered miraculous interpositions less frequent in proportion as they became less necessary; but also to his justice, which was provoked to diminish the frequency of gifts, which some did not scruple to pervert to mercenary purposes.^e

v. If we turn our view to the human means that contributed, at this time, to multiply the numbers of Earth's human. Christians, and to extend the limits of the church, we shall find a great variety of causes uniting their influence, and contributing jointly to this happy purpose. Among these must be reckoned the translations of the sacred writings into various languages, the zeal and labours of Origen in spreading abroad copies of them every where, and the different works that were published, by learned and pious men, in defence of the gospel. We may add also to this, that the acts of beneficence and liberality, performed by the Christians, even toward those whose religious principles they abhorred, had a great influence in attracting the esteem, and removing the prejudices of many, who were thus prepared for examining, with candour, the Christian doctrine, and consequently, for receiving its divine light. The worshippers of the pagan deities must have been destitute of every generous affection, of every humane feeling, if the view of that boundless charity, which the Christians exercised toward the poor, the love they expressed even to their enemies, the tender care they took of the sick and infirm, the humanity they discovered in the redemption of captives, and the other illustrious virtues, which rendered them so worthy of universal esteem, had not touched their hearts, dispelled their prepossessions, and rendered them more favourable to the disciples of Jesus. If, among the causes of the propagation of Christianity, there is any place due to *pious frauds*, it is certain, that they merit a very small part of the honour of having contributed to this glorious purpose; since they were practised by few, and that very seldom.

^d Origen, *contr. Celsam*, lib. i. p. 5, 7. Euseb. *Hist. Eccles.* lib. v. cap. vii. Cyprinus, *Ep. 1. ad Donat.* p. 3, and the notes of Balusius upon that passage, p. 376.

^e Spencer, *not. in Origen, contra Celsam*, p. 6, 7.

VI. That the limits of the church were extended in this century, is a matter beyond all controversy. It is not, however, equally certain in what manner, by what persons, or in what parts of the world, this was effected. Origen, invited from Alexandria by an Arabian prince, converted, by his assiduous labours, a certain tribe of wandering Arabs to the Christian faith.^h The Goths, a fierce and warlike people, who inhabited the countries of Mysia and Thrace, and who, accustomed to rapine, vexed the neighbouring provinces by perpetual incursions, received the knowledge of the gospel by the means of certain Christian doctors sent thither from Asia. The holy lives of these venerable teachers, and the miraculous powers with which they were endowed, attracted the esteem, even of a people educated to nothing but plunder and devastation, and absolutely uncivilized by letters or science; and their authority and influence grew so great, and produced, in process of time, such remarkable effects, that a great part of this barbarous people became the disciples of Christ, and put off, in a manner, that ferocity that was become so natural to them.ⁱ

Several countries receive the light of the gospel.

VII. The Christian assemblies, founded in Gaul by the Asiatic doctors in the preceding century, were few in number, and of very little extent; but both their number and their extent were considerably increased from the time of the emperor Decius. Under his reign Dionysius, Gatian, Trophymus, Paul, Saturninus, Martial, Stremonius, men of exemplary piety, passed into this province, and amidst dangers and trials of various kinds, erected churches at Paris, Tours, Arles, and several other places. This was followed by a rapid progress of the gospel among the Gauls, as the disciples of these pious teachers spread, in a short time, the knowledge of Christianity through the whole country.^k We must also place in this century the origin of several German churches, such as those of Cologne, Treves, Metz, and others, of which Eucharius, Valerius, Maternus, and Clemens, were the principal founders.^l The historians of Scotland inform us,

Among others Gaul and Germany.

^h Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.* lib. iv. cap. xix. p. 221.

ⁱ Sozomenus, *Hist. Eccles.* lib. ii. cap. vi. Paulus Diaconus, *Hist. Miscell.* lib. ii. cap. xiv. Philostorgius, *Hist. Eccles.* lib. ii. cap. v. p. 470.

^k See the history of the Franks by Gregory de Tours, book i. ch. xxviii. p. 23. Theodor. Ruinart, *Acta Martyr. sincera*, p. 109.

^l See Aug. Calmet, *Hist. de Lorraine*, tom. i. dissert. i. p. 7. Jo. Nicol. ab Hontheim, *Historia Trevirensis*, tom. i. ubi *Diss. de æra fundati Episcopatus Trevirensis*.

that the light of Christianity arose upon that country during this century ; but, though there be nothing improbable in this assertion, yet it is not built upon incontestable authority.^m

CHAPTER II.

CONCERNING THE CALAMITOUS EVENTS WHICH HAPPENED TO THE CHURCH
IN THIS CENTURY.

I. IN the beginning of this century, the Christian church suffered calamities of various kinds throughout the provinces of the Roman empire. These sufferings increased in a terrible manner, in consequence of a law made, in the year 203, by the emperor Severus, who, in other respects, was certainly no enemy to the Christians, by which every subject of the empire was prohibited to change the religion of his ancestors for that of the Christian or Jewish.ⁿ This law was, in its effects, most prejudicial to the Christians ; for, though it did not formally condemn them, and seemed only adapted to put a stop to the further progress of the gospel, yet it induced rapacious and unjust magistrates to persecute even unto death the poorer sort among the Christians, that thus the richer might be led, through fear of like treatment, to purchase their tranquillity and safety at an expensive rate. Hence many of the disciples of Christ, both in Egypt, and also in several parts of Asia and Africa, were put to death in consequence of this law. Among these Leonidas, the father of Origen, Perpetua and Felicitas, those two famous African ladies, whose *acts*^o are come down to our times, Potamiena Marcella, and other martyrs of both sexes, acquired an illustrious name by the magnanimity and tranquillity with which they endured the most cruel sufferings.

II. From the death of Severus to the reign of Maximin, the condition of the Christians was, in some places, prosperous, and in all, supportable. But with Maximin the face of affairs changed. This unworthy emperor having animated the Roman soldiers to assassinate Alexander Severus, dreaded the resentment of the Chris-

^m That under Maximin.

^m See Usher et Stillingfleet, *Antiquit. et Origin. Ecclesiar. Brit.* See also George Mackenzie, *De Regali Scotorum prosapia*, cap. viii. p. 119.

ⁿ Eusebius, *Eccles. Histor.* lib. vi. cap. i. Spartianus in *Severo*, cap. xvi. xvii. p. 61².
^o Theod. Ruinart, *Acta Martyr.* p. 90.

tians, whom that excellent prince had favoured and protected in a distinguished manner; and for this reason, he ordered the bishops, whom he knew that Alexander had always treated as his intimate friends, to be seized and put to death.^p During his reign, the Christians suffered in the most barbarous manner; for, though the edict of this tyrant extended only to the bishops and leaders of the Christian church, yet its shocking effects reached much further; as it animated the heathen priests, the magistrates, and the multitude, against Christians of every rank and order.^q

III. This storm was succeeded by a calm, in which the Christians enjoyed a happy tranquillity for many years. The accession of Decius Trajan to the imperial throne, in the year 249, raised a new tempest, in which the fury of persecution fell in a dreadful manner upon the church of Christ. For this emperor, either from an ill-grounded fear of the Christians, or from a violent zeal for the superstition of his ancestors, published most terrible and cruel edicts; by which the pretors were ordered, upon pain of death, either to extirpate the whole body of Christians without exception, or to force them, by torments of various kinds, to return to the pagan worship. Hence, in all the provinces of the empire, multitudes of Christians were, during the space of two years, put to death by the most horrid punishments,^r which an ingenious barbarity could invent. The most unhappy circumstance of all these cruelties was, their fatal influence upon the faith and constancy of many of the sufferers; for as this persecution was much more terrible than all those that preceded it, so a great number of Christians, dismayed, not at the approach of death, but at the aspect of those dreadful and lingering torments, which a barbarous magistracy had prepared to combat their constancy, fell from the profession of their faith, and secured themselves from punishment, either by *offering sacrifices*, or by *burning incense*, before the images of the gods, or by purchasing *certificates* from the pagan priests. Hence arose the opprobrious names of *Sacrificati*, given to those who

Many Christians, in consequence of the cruelty of Decius, became chargeable with defection.

^p Euseb. *Hist. Eccles.* lib. vi. cap. xxviii. p. 225. Orosius, *Hist.* lib. vii. cap. xix. p. 509.

^q Origen. tom. xxviii. in Matth. opp. tom. i. p. 137. See also Firmilianus in Cypriani *Epistolis*, p. 140.

^r Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.* lib. vi. cap. xxxix. p. 234, cap. xli. p. 238. Gregorius Nyss. in *vita Thaumaturgi*, tom. iii. opp. p. 568. Cyprianus, *De Lapsis*, p. 182.

sacrificed; *Thurificati*, to those who *burned incense*; and *Libellatici*, to those who *produced certificates*.^s

iv. This defection of such a prodigious number of Christians under Decius was the occasion of great commotions in the church, and produced debates of a very difficult and delicate nature. For the *lapsed*, or those that had fallen from their Christian profession, were desirous to be restored to church communion, without submitting to that painful course of *penitential* discipline, which the ecclesiastical laws indispensably required. The bishops were divided upon this matter; some were for showing the desired indulgence, while others opposed it with all their might.^t In Egypt and Africa, many, in order to obtain more speedily the pardon of their apostacy, interested the *martyrs* in their behalf, and received from them *letters of reconciliation and peace*,* i. e.

a formal act by which they, the martyrs, declared, in their last moments, that they looked upon them as worthy of their communion, and desired of consequence that they should be restored to their place among the brethren. Some bishops and presbyters readmitted into the church with too much facility, apostates and transgressors, who produced such testimonies as these. But Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, a man of severe wisdom and great dignity of character, acted in quite another way. Though he had no intention to derogate from the authority of the venerable martyrs, yet he opposed with vigour this unreasonable lenity, and set limits to the efficacy of these letters of reconciliation and peace. Hence arose a keen dispute between him and the martyrs, confessors, presbyters, and lapsed, seconded by the people; and yet, notwithstanding this formidable multitude of adversaries, the venerable bishop came off victorious.^u

^s These *certificates* were not all equally criminal, nor supposed all a degree of apostacy equally enormous. It is therefore necessary to advertise the reader of the following distinctions omitted by Dr. Mosheim: these certificates were sometimes no more than a permission to abstain from sacrificing, obtained by a fee given to the judges, and were not looked upon as an act of apostacy, unless the Christians, who demanded them, had declared to the judges, that they had conformed themselves to the emperor's edicts. But, at other times, they contained a profession of paganism, and were either offered voluntarily by the apostate, or were subscribed by him, when they were presented to him by the persecuting magistrates. Many used certificates, as letters of security, obtained from the priests at a high rate, and which dispensed them from either professing or denying their sentiments. See Spanheim. *Historia Christiana*, p. 732, 733. See also Prudentius. *Maranus in vita Cypriani*, operibus ejus præmissa, § 6, p. 54.

^t Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.* lib. vi. cap. xlv. Cypr. *Epistolæ*, in many places.

^u The whole history of this controversy may be gathered from the epistles of Cyprian. See also Gabr. Albaspinæus; *Observat. Eccles.* lib. i. observ. xx. p. 94. *Dalæus, De pœnitentiis et satisfactionibus humanis*, lib. vii. cap. xvi. p. 706.

v. Gallus, the successor of Decius, and Volusianus, son of the former, reanimated the flame of persecution, which was beginning to burn with less fury.^w And, beside the sufferings which the Christians had to undergo in consequence of their cruel edicts, they were also involved in the public calamities that prevailed at this time, and suffered grievously from a terrible pestilence, which spread desolation through many provinces of the empire.^x This pestilence also was an occasion which the pagan priests used with dexterity to renew the rage of persecution against them, by persuading the people that it was on account of the lenity used toward the Christians, that the gods sent down their judgments upon the nations. In the year 254, Valerian being declared emperor, made the fury of persecution cease, and restored the church to a state of tranquillity.

The persecutions under Gallus and Volusianus.

vi. The clemency and benevolence which Valerian showed to the Christians, continued until the fifth year of his reign. Then the scene began to change, and the change indeed was sudden. Macrianus, a superstitious and cruel bigot to paganism, had gained an entire ascendant over Valerian, and was his chief counsellor in every thing that related to the administration of the government. By the persuasion of this imperious minister, the Christians were prohibited to assemble themselves together, and their bishops and doctors were sent into banishment. This edict was published in the year 257, and was followed, the year after, by one still more severe; in consequence of which a considerable number of Christians, in all the different provinces of the empire, were put to death, and that by such cruel methods of execution, as were much more terrible than death itself. Of those that suffered in this persecution, the most eminent were Cyprian, bishop of Carthage; Sixtus, bishop of Rome; and Laurentius, a Roman deacon, who was barbarously consumed by a slow and lingering fire. An unexpected event suspended, for a while, the sufferings of the Christians. Valerian was made prisoner in the war against the Persians; and his son Gallienus, in the year 260, restored peace to the church.^y

Under Valerian.

^w Euseb. *Hist. Eccles.* lib. vii. cap. i. p. 250. Cyprian. *Epist.* lvii. lviii.

^x Vid. Cypriani *Lib. ad Demetrianum*.

^y Euseb. *Hist. Eccles.* lib. vii. cap. x. xi. p. 255. *Acta Cypriani*, as they are to be found in the *Acta Martyrum Ruinartii*, p. 216. Cypriani *Epist.* lxxvii. p. 158, edit. Baluz. lxxxvii. p. 167.

The state of
the church un-
der Gallienus,
Claudius, and
Aurelian.

VII. The condition of the Christians was rather supportable than happy, under the reign of Gallienus, which lasted eight years; as also under the short administration of his successor Claudius. Nor did they suffer much during the first four years of the reign of Aurelian, who was raised to the empire in the year 270. But the fifth year of this emperor's administration would have proved fatal to them, had not his violent death prevented the execution of his cruel purposes. For while, set on by the unjust suggestions of his own superstition, or by the barbarous counsels of a bigoted priesthood, he was preparing a formidable attack upon the Christians, he was obliged to march into Gaul, where he was murdered, in the year 275, before his edicts were published throughout the empire.^z Few therefore suffered martyrdom under his reign; and indeed, during the remainder of this century, the Christians enjoyed a considerable measure of ease and tranquillity. They were, at least, free from any violent attacks of oppression and injustice, except in a small number of cases, where the avarice and superstition of the Roman magistrates interrupted their tranquillity.^a

VIII. While the Roman emperors and proconsuls employed against the Christians the terror of unrighteous edicts, and the edge of the destroying sword, the Platonic philosophers, who have been described above, exhausted against Christianity all the force of their learning and eloquence, and all the resources of their art and dexterity, in rhetorical declamations, subtile writings, and ingenious stratagems. These artful adversaries were so much the more dangerous and formidable, as they had adopted several of the doctrines and institutions of the gospel, and with a specious air of moderation and impartiality, were attempting, after the example of their master Ammonius, to reconcile paganism with Christianity, and to form a sort of coalition of the ancient and the new religion. These philosophers had at their head, in this century, Porphyry, a Syrian, or, as some allege, a Tyrian, by birth, who wrote against

The attempts
of the philoso-
phers against
Christianity.

^z Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.* lib. vii. cap. xxx. Lactantius. *De mortibus Persequutor.* cap. vi.

^a Among these vexations may be reckoned the cruelty of Galerius Maximian, who, toward the conclusion of this century, persecuted the ministers of his court, and the soldiers of his army, who had professed Christianity. See Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.* lib. viii. cap. i. p. 292. iv. p. 295, 317.

the Christians a long and laborious work, which was destroyed afterward by an imperial edict.^b He was, undoubtedly, a writer of great dexterity, genius, and erudition, as those of his works that yet remain sufficiently testify. But those very works, and the history of his life, show us, at the same time, that he was a much more virulent, than a formidable enemy to the Christians. For by them it appears, that he was much more attentive to the suggestions of a superstitious spirit and the visions of a lively fancy, than to the sober dictates of right reason and a sound judgment. And it may be more especially observed of the fragments that yet remain of his work against the Christians, that they are equally destitute of judgment and equity, and are utterly unworthy of a wise and a good man.^c

ix. Many were the deceitful and perfidious stratagems by which this sect endeavoured to obscure the lustre, and to diminish the authority of the Christian doctrine. But none of these were more dangerous than the seducing artifice with which they formed a comparison between the life, actions, and miracles of Christ, and the history of the ancient philosophers; and placed the contending parties in such fallacious points of view, as to make the pretended sages of antiquity appear in nothing inferior to the divine Saviour. With this view, Archytas of Tarentum, Pythagoras, of whom Porphyry wrote the life, Apollonius Tyanæus, a Pythagorean philosopher, whose miracles and peregrinations were highly celebrated by the vulgar, were brought upon the scene, and exhibited as divine teachers and rivals of the glory of the Son of God. Philostratus, one of the most eminent rhetoricians of this age, composed a pompous history of the life of Apollonius, who was little else than a cunning knave,

Compari
sons drawn
between the
philosophers
and Christ.

^b See Holstenius, *De vita Porphyri*. cap. xi. Fabric. *Lux Evang.* p. 154. Buddens, *Isagoge in Theologiam*, tom. ii. p. 1009.

^c This work of Porphyry against the Christians was burnt by an edict of Constantine the Great. It was divided into fifteen books, as we find in Eusebius, and contained the blackest calumnies against the Christians. The first book treated of the contradictions which he pretended to have found in the sacred writings. The greatest part of the *twelfth* is employed in fixing the time when the prophecies of Daniel were written. For Porphyry himself found these prophecies so clearly and evidently fulfilled, that, to avoid the force of the argument, deducible from thence, in favour of Christianity, he was forced to have recourse to this absurd supposition, that *these prophecies had been published under the name of Daniel*, by one who lived in the time of Antiochus, and wrote after the arrival of the events foretold. Methodius, Eusebius, and Apollonarius, wrote against Porphyry. But these refutations have been long since lost.

and did nothing but ape the austerity and sanctity of Pythagoras. This history appears manifestly designed to draw a parallel between Christ and the philosopher of Tyana; but the impudent fictions, and the ridiculous fables, with which this work is filled, must, one would think, have rendered it incapable of deceiving any who were possessed of a sound mind; any, but such as, through the corruption of vicious prejudices were willing to be deceived.^d

x. But as there are no opinions, however absurd, and no stories, however idle and improbable, that a weak and ignorant multitude, who are more attentive to the pomp of *words* than to the truth of *things*, will not easily swallow; so it happened, that many were ensnared by the absurd attempts of these insidious philosophers. Some were induced by these perfidious stratagems to abandon the Christian religion, which they had embraced. Others, when they heard that true Christianity, as it was taught by Jesus, and not as it was afterward corrupted by his disciples, differed almost in nothing from the pagan religion properly explained and restored to its primitive purity, determined to remain in the religion of their ancestors, and in the worship of their gods. A third sort were led, by these comparisons between Christ and the ancient philosophers, to form to themselves a motley system of religion composed of the tenets of both parties, whom they treated with the same veneration and respect. Such was, particularly, the method of Alexander Severus, who paid indiscriminately divine honours to Christ, and to Orpheus, to Apollonius, and the other philosophers and heroes whose names were famous in ancient times.

xi. The credit and power of the Jews were now too much diminished to render them as capable of injuring the Christians, by their influence upon the magistrates, as they had formerly been. This did not, however, discourage their malicious efforts, as the books which Tertullian and Cyprian have written against them abundantly show, with several other writings of the Christian doctors, who complained of the malignity of the Jews, and of their perfidious stratagems.^e During the per-

^d See Olearius's preface to the life of Apollonius, by Philostratus; as also Moesheim's notes to his Latin translation of Cudworth's *Intellectual System*, p. 304, 309, 311, 334.

^e Hyppolytus, *Serm. in Susann. et Daniel*, tom. i. opp. p. 274, 276.

secution under Severus, a certain person called Domnius, who had embraced Christianity, deserted to the Jews, doubtless, to avoid the punishments that were decreed against the Christians; and it was to recall this apostate to his duty and his profession, that Serapion, bishop of Antioch, wrote a particular treatise against the Jews.^f We may, however, conclude from this instance, that when the Christians were persecuted, the Jews were treated with less severity and contempt, on account of their enmity against the disciples of Jesus. And from the same fact we may also learn, that though they were in a state of great subjection and abasement, yet they were not entirely deprived of all power of oppressing the Christians.

^f Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.* lib. vi. cap. xii. p. 213

PART II.

INTERNAL HISTORY OF THE CHURCH.

CHAPTER I.

CONCERNING THE STATE OF LETTERS AND PHILOSOPHY DURING THIS CENTURY.

I. **THE** arts and sciences, which in the preceding century, were in a declining state, seemed in this The decay of learning. ready to expire, and had now lost all their vigour, and all their lustre. The celebrated rhetorician Longinus, and the eminent historian Dion Cassius, with a few others, were the last among the Greeks, who stood in the breach against the prevailing ignorance and barbarism of the times. Men of learning and genius were less numerous still in the western provinces of the empire, though there were, in several places, flourishing schools erected for the advancement of the sciences, and the culture of taste and genius. Different reasons contributed to this decay of learning. Few of the emperors patronised the sciences, or encouraged, by the prospect of their favour and protection, that emulation, which is the soul of the republic of letters. Beside, the civil wars that almost always distracted the empire, were extremely unfavourable to the pursuit of science, and the perpetual incursions of the barbarous nations interrupted that leisure and tranquillity which are so essential to the progress of learning and knowledge, and extinguished, among a people accustomed to nothing almost but the din of arms, all desire of literary acquisitions.^g

II. If we turn our eyes toward the state of philosophy, The state of philosophy, principally the Platonic. the prospect will appear somewhat less desolate and comfortless. There were, as yet, in several of the Grecian sects, men of considerable knowledge and reputation, of whom Longinus has mentioned the greatest part.^h But all these sects were gradually

^g See the *Literary History of France*, by the benedictine monks, vol. i. part ii. p. 317.

^h In his life of Plotinus, epitomized by Porphyry, ch. xx. p. 128, edit. Fabricii.

eclipsed by the school of Ammonius, whose origin and doctrines have been considered above. This victorious sect, which was formed in Egypt, issued forth from thence with such a rapid progress, that, in a short time, it extended itself almost throughout the Roman empire, and drew into its *vortex* the greatest part of those who applied themselves, through inclination, to the study of philosophy. This amazing progress was due to Plotinus, the most eminent disciple of Ammonius, a man of a most subtile invention, and endowed by nature with a genius capable of the most profound researches, and equal to the investigation of the most abstruse and difficult subjects. This penetrating and sublime philosopher taught publicly first in Persia, and afterward at Rome, and in Campania; in all which places the youth flocked in crowds to receive his instruction. He comprehended the precepts of his philosophy in several books, the most of which are yet extant.ⁱ

Plotinus.

III. The number of disciples that were formed in the school of Plotinus, is almost beyond credibility. The most famous of them was Porphyry,^k who spread abroad through Sicily and many other countries the doctrine of his master, revised with great accuracy, adorned with the graces of a flowing and elegant style, and enriched with new inventions and curious improvements.^l From the time of Ammonius, until the sixth century, this was almost the only system of philosophy that was publicly taught at Alexandria. A certain philosopher, whose name was Plutarch, having learned it there, brought it into Greece, and renewed, at Athens, the celebrated *academy*, from whence issued a set of illustrious philosophers, whom we shall have occasion to mention in the progress of this work.^m

His doctrine
universally
propagated.

ⁱ See Porphyrii *vita Plotini*, of which Fabricius has given an edition in his *Bibliotheca Græca*, tom. iv. p. 91. Bayle's *Diction.* tom. iii. at the article Plotinus; as also Brucker's *Historia Critica Philosophiæ*.

^k Porphyry was first the disciple of Longinus, author of the justly celebrated *Treatise on the Sublime*. But having passed from Greece to Rome, where he heard Plotinus, he was so charmed with the genius and penetration of this philosopher, that he attached himself entirely to him. See Plotin. *vit.* p. 3. Eunap. c. ii. p. 17.

^l Holstenius *vit. Porphyrii*, republished in the *Bibliotheca Græca* of Fabricius.

^m Marini *vita Procli*, cap. xi. xiii. p. 25.

IV. We have unfolded above the nature and doctrines of this philosophy, as far as was compatible with the brevity of our present design. It is, however, proper to add here, that its votaries were not all of the same sentiments, but thought very differently upon a variety of subjects. This difference of opinion was the natural consequence of that fundamental law, which the whole sect was obliged to keep constantly in view, viz. *that truth was to be pursued with the utmost liberty, and to be collected from all the different systems in which it lay dispersed.* Hence it happened, that the Athenians rejected certain opinions that were entertained by the philosophers of Alexandria. None, however, who were ambitious to be ranked among these new Platonists, called in question the main doctrines, which formed the groundwork of their singular system; those, for example, which regarded the *existence of one God; the fountain of all things; the eternity of the world; the dependence of matter upon the Supreme Being; the nature of souls; the plurality of gods; the method of interpreting the popular superstitions, &c.*

V. The famous question concerning the excellence and utility of human learning, was now debated with great warmth among the Christians; and the contending parties, in this controversy, seemed hitherto of equal force in point of numbers, or nearly so. Many recommended the study of philosophy, and an acquaintance with the Greek and Roman literature; while others maintained, that these were pernicious to the interests of genuine Christianity, and the progress of true piety. The cause of letters and philosophy triumphed, however, by degrees; and those who wished well to them, gained ground more and more, till at length the superiority was manifestly decided in their favour. This victory was principally due to the influence and authority of Origen, who having been early instructed in the new kind of platonism already mentioned, blended it unhappily with the purer and more sublime tenets of a celestial doctrine, and recommended it, in the warmest manner, to the youth who attended his public lessons. The fame of this philosopher increased daily among the Christians; and, in proportion to his rising credit, his method of proposing and explaining the doctrines of Christianity gained authority, till it became almost universal. Beside, some of the disciples

Different
sects of this
philosophy.

The state of
learning
among the
Christians.

of Plotinus having embraced Christianity, on condition that they should be allowed to retain such of the opinions of their master as they thought of superior excellence and merit," this must also have contributed, in some measure, to turn the balance in favour of the sciences. These Christian philosophers preserving still a fervent zeal for the doctrines of their heathen chief, would naturally embrace every opportunity of spreading them abroad, and instilling them into the minds of the ignorant and the unwary.

CHAPTER II.

CONCERNING THE DOCTORS AND MINISTERS OF THE CHURCH, AND ITS FORM OF GOVERNMENT, DURING THIS CENTURY.

I. THE form of ecclesiastical government that had been adopted by Christians in general, had now acquired greater degrees of stability and force, both in particular churches, and in the universal society of Christians collectively considered. It appears incontestable from the most authentic records, and the best histories of this century, that, in the larger cities, there was, at the head of each church, a person to whom was given the title of *bishop*, who ruled this sacred community with a certain sort of authority, in concert, however, with the body of *presbyters*, and consulting, in matters of moment, the opinion and the voices of the whole assembly.^a It is also equally evident, that in every province, *one* bishop was invested with a certain superiority over the rest, in point of rank and authority. This was necessary to the maintenance of that *association* of churches that had been introduced in the preceding century; and contributed, moreover, to facilitate the holding of *general councils*, and to give a certain degree of order and consistence to their proceedings. It must, at the same time, be carefully observed, that the rights and privileges of these *primitive bishops*, were not, every where, accurately fixed, nor determined in such a manner as to prevent encroachments and

Of the form
of church
government.

^a Augustinus, *Epistola lvi. ad Dioscor.* p. 260, tom. ii. opp.

^b A satisfactory account of this matter may be seen in Blondelli *Apologia pro Sententiâ Hieronymi de Episcopis et Presbyteris*, p. 136, as that author has collected all the testimonies of the ancients relative to that subject.

disputes ; nor does it appear, that the chief authority, in the province, was always conferred upon that bishop who presided over the church established in the metropolis. It is further to be noticed, as a matter beyond all dispute, that the bishops of Rome, Antioch, and Alexandria, considered as rulers of primitive and apostolic churches, had a kind of pre-eminence over all others, and were not only consulted frequently in affairs of a difficult and momentous nature, but were also distinguished by peculiar rights and privileges.

II. With respect, particularly, to the bishop of Rome ; he is supposed by Cyprian to have had, at this time, a certain pre-eminence in the church ;^p nor does he stand alone in this opinion. But it is to be carefully observed, that even those who, with Cyprian, attributed this pre-eminence to the Roman prelate, insisted, at the same time, with the utmost warmth, upon the *equality*, in point of *dignity* and *authority*, that subsisted among all the members of the episcopal order. In consequence of this opinion of an *equality* among all Christian bishops, they rejected, with contempt, the judgment of the *bishop of Rome*, when they thought it ill founded or unjust, and followed their own sense of things with a perfect independence. Of this Cyprian himself gave an eminent example, in his famous controversy with Stephen bishop of Rome, concerning the *baptism of heretics*, in which he treated the arrogance of that imperious prelate with a noble indignation, and also with a perfect contempt. Whoever, therefore, compares all these things together, will easily perceive, that the *pre-eminence* of the bishop of Rome, was a pre-eminence of *order* and *association*,¹ and not of *power* and *authority*. Or, to explain the matter yet more clearly, the pre-eminence of the bishop of Rome, in the universal church, was such as that of Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, was in the African churches. And every one knows, that the precedence of this latter prelate diminished in nothing the equality that subsisted among all the African bishops, invalidated in no instance

^p Cyprian, *Ep.* lxxiii. p. 131. *Ep.* lv. p. 86. *Ib.* *De Unitate Ecclesiæ*, p. 195, edit. Baluzii.

¹ q So I have translated *Principatus ordinis et consociationis*, which could not be otherwise rendered without a long circumlocution. The *pre-eminence* here mentioned, signifies the right of *convening councils*, of *presiding in them*, of *collecting voices*, and such other things as were essential to the *order* of these assemblies.

their rights and liberties; but gave only to Cyprian, as the president of their general assemblies, a power of calling councils, of presiding in them, of admonishing his brethren in a mild and fraternal manner, and of executing, in short, such offices as the *order* and purposes of these ecclesiastical meetings necessarily required.*

III. The face of things began now to change in the Christian church. The ancient method of ecclesiastical government seemed, in general, still to subsist, while, at the same time, by imperceptible steps, it varied from the primitive rule, and degenerated toward the form of a religious monarchy. For the bishops aspired to higher degrees of power and authority than they had formerly possessed; and not only violated the rights of the people, but also made gradual encroachments upon the privileges of the presbyters. And that they might cover these usurpations with an air of justice, and an appearance of reason, they published new doctrines concerning the nature of the church, and of the episcopal dignity, which, however, were in general so obscure, that they themselves seem to have understood them as little as those to whom they were delivered. One of the principal authors of this change in the government of the church, was Cyprian, who pleaded for the power of the bishops with more zeal and vehemence than had ever been hitherto employed in that cause, though not with an unshaken constancy and perseverance; for, in difficult and perilous times, necessity sometimes obliged him to yield, and to submit several things to the judgment and authority of the church.

The government of the church degenerates into a monarchical form.

IV. This change, in the form of ecclesiastical government, was soon followed by a train of vices, which dishonoured the character and authority of those to whom the administration of the church was committed. For, though several yet continued to exhibit to the world illustrious examples of primitive piety and Christian virtue, yet many were sunk in luxury and voluptuousness, puffed up with vanity, arrogance, and ambition, possessed with a spirit of contention and discord, and addicted to many other vices that cast an undeserved re-

The vices of the clergy.

* See Steph. Baluzii *adnot. ad Cypriani Epistolas*, p. 387, 389, 400. Consult particularly the lxxi. and lxxiii. epistles of Cyprian, and the lv. addressed to Cornelius bishop of Rome, in which letters the Carthaginian prelate pleads with warmth and vehemence for the equality of all Christian bishops.

proach upon the holy religion, of which they were the unworthy professors and ministers. This is testified in such an ample manner, by the repeated complaints of many of the most respectable writers of this age,^s that truth will not permit us to spread the veil, which we should otherwise be desirous to cast over such enormities among an order so sacred. The *bishops* assumed, in many places, a princely authority, particularly those who had the greatest number of churches under their inspection, and who presided over the most opulent assemblies. They appropriated to their evangelical function the splendid ensigns of temporal majesty. A throne, surrounded with ministers, exalted above his equals the servant of the meek and humble Jesus; and sumptuous garments dazzled the eyes and the minds of the multitude into an ignorant veneration for their arrogated authority. The example of the bishops was ambitiously imitated by the *presbyters*, who, neglecting the sacred duties of their station, abandoned themselves to the indolence and delicacy of an effeminate and luxurious life. The *deacons*, beholding the presbyters deserting thus their functions, boldly usurped their rights and privileges; and the effects of a corrupt ambition were spread through every rank of the sacred order.

v. From what has been now observed, we may come, perhaps, at the true origin of *minor* or *lesser orders*, which were, in this century, added every where to those of the *bishops*, *presbyters*, and *deacons*. For certainly, the titles and offices of *subdeacons*, *acolythi*, *ostiarii*, or doorkeepers, *readers*, *exorcists*, and *copiatae*, would never have been heard of in the church, if its rulers had been assiduously and zealously employed in promoting the interests of truth and piety by their labours and their example. But when the honours and privileges of the bishops and presbyters were augmented, the *deacons* also began to extend their ambitious views, and to despise those lower functions and employments which they had hitherto exercised with such humility and zeal. The additional orders that were now created to diminish the labours of the present rulers of the church, had functions allotted to them, which their names partly explain.^t The institution of *exorcists* was a conse-

^s Origen. *Comm. in Matthæum*, part i. opp. p. 420, 441, 442. Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.* lib. viii. cap. i. p. 291, &c.

^t The *subdeacons* were designed to ease the *deacons* of the meanest part of their

quence of the doctrine of the new Platonists, which the Christians adopted, and which taught that the evil *genii*, or spirits, were continually hovering over human bodies, toward which they were carried by a natural and vehement desire; and that vicious men were not so much impelled to sin by an innate depravity, or by the seduction of example, as by the internal suggestions of some evil demon. The *copiatæ* were employed in providing for the decent interment of the dead.

VI. Marriage was permitted to all the various ranks and orders of the clergy, high and low. Those, however, who continued in a state of celibacy, obtained Marriage of the clergy. by this abstinence a higher reputation of sanctity and virtue than others. This was owing to an almost general persuasion, that they, who took wives, were of all others the most subject to the influence of malignant demons." And as it was of infinite importance to the interests of the church, that no impure or malevolent spirit entered into the bodies of such as were appointed to govern or to instruct others; so the people were desirous that the clergy should use their utmost efforts to abstain from the pleasures of the conjugal life. Many of the sacred order, especially in Africa, consented to satisfy the desires of the people, and endeavoured to do this in such a manner as not to offer an entire violence to their own inclinations. For Concubines introduced among the clergy. this purpose, they formed connexions with those women who had made vows of perpetual chastity;

work. Their office, consequently, was to prepare the sacred vessels of the altar, and to deliver them to the deacons in time of divine service; to attend the doors of the church during the communion service; to go on the bishop's embassies, with his letters or messages to foreign churches. In a word, they were so subordinate to the superior rulers of the church, that, by a canon of the council of Laodicea, they were forbidden to sit in the presence of a *deacon* without his leave. The order of *acolythi* was peculiar to the Latin church; for there was no such order in the Greek church during the four first centuries. Their name signifies *attendants*; and their principal office was to light the candles of the church, and to attend the ministers with wine for the eucharist. The *ostiarii*, or *doorkeepers*, were appointed to open and shut the doors, as officers and servants under the *deacons* and *subdeacons*; to give notice of the times of prayer and church assemblies, which, in time of persecution, required a private signal for fear of discovery; and that probably was the first reason for instituting this order in the church of Rome, whose example, by degrees, was soon followed by other churches. The *readers* were those that were appointed to read the Scripture in that part of divine service to which the *catechumens* were admitted. The *exorcists* were appointed to drive out evil spirits from the bodies of persons possessed; they had been long known in the church, but were not erected into an ecclesiastical order until the latter end of the third century. The *copiatæ*, or *fossarii*, were an order of the inferior clergy, whose business it was to take care of funerals, and to provide for the decent interment of the dead. In vain have Baronius and other Romish writers asserted, that these inferior orders were of apostolical institution. The contrary is evidently proved, since none of these offices are mentioned as having taken place before the third century, and the origin can be traced no higher than the fourth.

n Porphyrius, *de ecclesiastica lib. 2. p. 417.*

and it was an ordinary thing for an ecclesiastic to admit one of these fair saints to the participation of his bed, but still under the most solemn declarations, that nothing passed in this commerce that was contrary to the rules of chastity and virtue.^w These holy concubines were called by the Greeks, *Συνεργαῖοι*; and by the Latins, *Mulieres subintroductæ*. This indecent custom alarmed the zeal of the more pious among the bishops, who employed the utmost efforts of their severity and vigilance to abolish it, though it was a long time before they entirely effected this laudable purpose.

VII. Thus we have given a short, though not a very pleasing view of the rulers of the church during this century; and should now mention the principal writers that distinguished themselves in it by their learned and pious productions. The most eminent of these, whether we consider the extent of his fame or the multiplicity of his labours, was Origen, *presbyter* and *catechist* of Alexandria, a man of vast and uncommon abilities, and the greatest luminary of the Christian world that this age exhibited to view. Had the justness of his judgment been equal to the immensity of his genius, the fervour of his piety, his indefatigable patience, his extensive erudition, and his other eminent and superior talents, all encomiums must have fallen short of his merit. Yet such as he was, his virtues and his labours deserve the admiration of all ages; and his name will be transmitted with honour through the annals of time as long as learning and genius shall be esteemed among men.^x

The second in renown among the writers of this century, was Julius Africanus, a native of Palestine, a man of the most profound erudition, but the greatest part of whose learned labours are unhappily lost.

Hippolytus, whose history is much involved in darkness,^y is also esteemed among the most celebrated authors and martyrs of this age; but those writings, which at present bear his name, are justly looked upon by many as either extremely corrupted, or entirely spurious.

^w *Credat Judæus Apella*. See however Dodwell. *Diss. tertia Cyprianica*, and Lud. An. Muratorius, *Diss. de Synisactis et Agapetis*, in his *Anecd. Græc.* p. 218, as also Baluzius *ad Cypriani Epistol.* p. 5, 12, &c.

^x See a very learned and useful work of the famous Huet, bishop of Avranches, entitled, *Origeniana*. See also Doucin, *Histoire d'Origene et des mouvemens arrives dans l'Eglise au sujet de sa doctrine*; and Bayle's *Dictionary*, at the article Origen.

^y The benedictine monks have, with great labour and erudition, endeavoured to dispel his darkness in their *Histoire Littéraire de la France*, tom. i. p. 361.

Gregory, bishop of New Cesarea, acquired, at this time, the title of *Thaumaturgus*, i. e. wonderworker, on account of the variety of great and signal miracles, which he is said to have wrought during the course of his ministry. Few of his works have come down to our times, and his miracles are called in question by many, as unsupported by sufficient evidence.^z

It were to be wished that we had more of the writings of Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, than those which have survived the ruins of time, since the few remaining fragments of his works discover the most consummate wisdom and prudence, and the most amiable spirit of moderation and candour, and thus abundantly vindicate, from all suspicion of flattery, the ancients who mentioned him under the title of Dionysius the Great.^a

Methodius appears to have been a man of great piety, and highly respectable on account of his eminent virtue; but those of his works which are yet extant, discover no great degree of penetration and acuteness in handling controversy and weighing opinions.

VIII. Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, a man of the most eminent abilities and flowing eloquence, stands foremost in the list of Latin writers. His letters, The Latin writers. and indeed the most of his works, breathe such a noble and pathetic spirit of piety, that it is impossible to read them without the warmest feelings of enthusiasm. We must however observe, that he would have been a better writer, had he been less attentive to the ornaments of rhetoric; and a better bishop, had he been able to restrain the vehemence of his temper, and to distinguish, with more acuteness, between truth and falsehood.

The *dialogue* of Minucius Felix, which bears the title of *Octavius*, effaces with such judgment, spirit, and force, the calumnies and reproaches that were cast upon the Christians by their adversaries, that it deserves an attentive perusal from those who are desirous to know the state of the church during this century.

The *seven books* of Arnobius, the African, written *against the Gentiles*, are a still more copious and ample defence of the Christians, and though obscure in several

^z See Van Dale's preface to his Latin Treatise concerning *Oracles*, p. 6.

^a The history of Dionysius is particularly illustrated by Jac. Basnage, in his *Histoire de l'Eglise*, tom. i. livr. ii. chap. v. p. 68.

places, may yet be read with pleasure and with profit. It is true, that this rhetorician, too little instructed in the Christian religion when he wrote this work, has mingled great errors with solemn and important truths; and has exhibited Christianity under a certain philosophical form, very different from that in which it is commonly received.

We refer our readers, for an account of the authors of inferior note, who lived in this century, to those who have professedly given histories or enumerations of the Christian writers.

CHAPTER III.

CONCERNING THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN THIS CENTURY.

I. THE principal doctrines of Christianity were now explained to the people in their native purity and simplicity, without any mixture of abstract reasonings or subtile inventions: nor were the feeble minds of the multitude loaded with a great variety of precepts.^b But the Christian doctors, who had applied themselves to the study of letters and philosophy, soon abandoned the frequented paths, and struck out into the devious wilds of fancy. The Egyptians distinguished themselves in this new method of explaining the truth. They looked upon it as a noble and a glorious task to bring the doctrines of celestial wisdom into a certain subjection to the precepts of their philosophy, and to make deep and profound researches into the intimate and hidden nature of those truths which the divine Saviour had delivered to his disciples. Origen was at the head of this speculative tribe. This great man, enchanted by the charms of the Platonic philosophy, set it up as the test of all religion; and imagined, that the reasons of each doctrine were to be found in that favourite philosophy, and their nature and extent to be determined by it.^c It must be confessed, that he handled this matter with modesty and with caution; but he still gave an example to his disciples, the abuse of

^b See Origen, in *Præf. libror. de Principiis*, tom. i. opp. p. 49, and lib. i. *De Principiis*, cap. ii. See also Gregorii Neocæsariensis, *Expositio Fidei*, p. 11, of his works, according to the edition of Ger. Vossius.

^c This is manifest from what remains of his *Stromata*; as also from his books *De Principiis*, which are still preserved in a Latin translation of them by Rufinus.

which could not fail to be pernicious, and under the authority of which they would naturally indulge themselves without restraint in every wanton fancy. And so, indeed, the case was ; for the disciples of Origen, breaking forth from the limits fixed by their master, interpreted, in the most licentious manner, the divine truths of religion according to the tenor of the Platonic philosophy. From these teachers the philosophical, or *scholastic theology*, as it is called, derives its origin ; and proceeding hence, passed through various forms and modifications, according to the genius, turn, and erudition of those who embraced it.

II. The same principles gave rise to another species of *theology*, which was called *mystic*. And what must seem at first sight surprising here is, that this *mystic theology*, though formed at the same time, and derived from the same source with the *scholastic*, yet had a natural tendency to overturn and destroy it. The authors of this *mystic* science are not known ; but the principles from whence it sprung are manifest. Its first promoters proceeded from that known doctrine of the Platonic school, which also was adopted by Origen and his disciples, that *the divine nature was diffused through all human souls* ; or, in other words, that *the faculty of reason*, from which proceeds the health and vigour of the mind, was an *emanation from God into the human soul, and comprehended in it the principles and elements of all truth, human and divine*. They denied that men could, by labour or study, excite this celestial flame in their breasts ; and therefore, they disapproved highly of the attempts of those who, by definitions, abstract theorems, and profound speculations, endeavoured to form distinct notions of truth, and to discover its hidden nature. On the contrary, they maintained, that *silence, tranquillity, repose, and solitude*, accompanied with such acts of mortification as might tend to extenuate and exhaust the body, were the *means* by which the *hidden and internal word* was *excited* to produce its latent virtues, and to instruct men in the knowledge of divine things. For thus they reasoned ; “ they who behold with a noble contempt all human affairs, who turn away their eyes from terrestrial vanities, and shut all the avenues of the outward senses against the contagious influences of a material world, must necessarily return to God when the spirit is thus disengaged from the impediments that

The rise of
the mystic
theology.

prevented that happy union. And in this blessed frame, they not only enjoy inexpressible raptures from their communion with the Supreme Being, but also are invested with the inestimable privilege of contemplating truth undisguised and uncorrupted in its native purity, while others behold it in a vitiated and delusive form."

III. This method of reasoning produced strange effects, and drove many into caves and deserts, where they macerated their bodies with hunger and thirst, and submitted to all the miseries of the severest discipline that a gloomy imagination could prescribe. And, it is not improbable that Paul, the first hermit, was rather engaged by this fanatical system, than by the persecution under Decius, to fly into the most solitary deserts of Thebais, where he led, during the space of ninety years, a life more worthy of a savage animal than of a rational being.^d It is, however, to be observed, that though Paul is placed at the head of the order of hermits, yet that unsociable manner of life was very common in Egypt, Syria, India, and Mesopotamia, not only long before his time, but even before the coming of Christ. And it is still practised among the Mahometans, as well as the Christians, in those arid and burning climates.^e For the glowing atmosphere that surrounds these countries is a natural cause of that love of solitude and repose, of that indolent and melancholy disposition, that are remarkably common among their languid inhabitants.

IV. But let us turn away our eyes from these scenes of fanaticism, which are so opprobrious to human nature, and consider some other circumstances that belong more or less to the history of the Christian doctrine during this century. And here it is proper to mention the useful labours of those, who manifested their zeal for the holy Scriptures by the care they took to have accurate copies of them multiplied every where, and that at such moderate prices, as rendered them of easy purchase; as also to have them translated into various languages, and published in correct editions. Many of the more opulent among the Christians contributed generously a great part of their substance to the carrying on of these pious and excellent undertakings. Pie-

Hence the rise of monks and hermits.

The zeal of many in spreading abroad the sacred writings.

^d The life of this hermit was written by Jerom.

^e See the travels of Lucas, in the year 1714, second volume, p. 363.

rius and Hesychius in Egypt, and Lucian at Antioch, employed much pains in correcting the copies of the *Septuagint*; and Pamphidus of Cæsarea, laboured with great diligence and success in works of the same nature, until a glorious martyrdom finished his course. But Origen surpassed all others in diligence and assiduity; and his famous *Hexapla*, though almost entirely destroyed by the waste of time, will, even in its fragments, remain an eternal monument of the incredible application with which that great man laboured to remove those obstacles which retarded the progress of the gospel.^f

v. After the encomiums we have given to Origen, who has an undoubted right to the first place among the interpreters of the Scriptures in this century, it is not without a deep concern that we are obliged to add, that he also, by an unhappy method, opened a secure retreat for all sorts of errors that a wild and irregular imagination could bring forth. Having entertained a notion that it was extremely difficult, if not impossible, to defend every thing contained in the sacred writings from the cavils of heretics and infidels, so long as they were explained *literally*, according to the real import of the terms, he had recourse to the fecundity of a lively imagination, and maintained, that the Holy Scriptures were to be interpreted in the same *allegorical* manner that the Platonists explained the history of the gods. In consequence of this pernicious rule of interpretation, he alleged, that the words of Scripture were, in many places, absolutely void of sense; and that though in others there were, indeed, certain notions conveyed under the outward terms according to their literal force and import, yet it was not in these that the true meaning of the sacred writers was to be sought, but in a mysterious and hidden sense arising from the nature of the things themselves.^g This *hidden sense* he endeavours to investigate throughout his *commentaries*, neglecting and

Origen's method of interpreting the scriptures.

^f The fragments that yet remain of Origen's *Hexapla*, were collected and published by the learned Montfaucon, in folio, at Paris, in 1713. See also upon this head Buddei *Isagoge in Theolog.* tom. ii. p. 1581; and Carpzovii *Critic. Sacr. Veter. Testam.* p. 574.

^g For a further illustration of this matter, the reader may consult the excellent preface of De la Rue, to the second volume of the works of Origen, published in folio at Paris, in the year 1733. An accurate and full account of Origen's method of interpreting the Scripture may be found in the work entitled *Commentar. de rebus Christian. ante Constantinum M.* p. 629; where the philosophy and theology of that great man, and his controversy with Demetrius bishop of Alexandria, are treated of professedly, and at large.

despising, for the most part, the *outward letter*; and in this devious path he displays the most ingenious strokes of fancy, though always at the expense of truth, whose divine simplicity is scarcely discernible through the cobweb veil of allegory.^h Nor did the inventions of Origen end here. He divided this *hidden sense*, which he pursued with such eagerness, into *moral* and *mystical*, or *spiritual*. The *moral* sense of Scripture displays those doctrines that relate to the inward state of the soul, and the conduct of life. The *mystical* or *spiritual* sense represents the nature, the laws, and the history of the *spiritual* or *mystical* world. We are not yet at the end of the labyrinth; for he subdivided this *mystical* world of his own creation into two distinct regions, the one of which he called the *superior*, i. e. *heaven*; and the other the *inferior*, by which he meant the *church*. This led to another division of the *mystical* sense into an earthly or *allegorical* sense, adapted to the inferior world, and a celestial or *anagogetical* one adapted to the *superior* region. This chimerical method of explaining the Scripture was, before Origen, received by many Christians, who were deluded into it by the example of the Jews. But as this learned man reduced it into a system, and founded it upon fixed and determinate rules, he is, on that account, commonly considered as its principal author.

VI. A prodigious number of interpreters, both in this and the succeeding ages, followed the method of Origen, though with some variations; nor could the few, who explained the sacred writings with judgment, and a true spirit of criticism, oppose, with any success, the torrent of allegory that was overflowing the church. The *commentaries* of Hippolytus, which are yet extant, show manifestly, that this good man was entirely addicted to the system of Origen, and the same judgment may be hazard-

Other interpreters.

^h Origen, in his *Stromata*, book x. expresses himself in the following manner: "the source of many evils lies in adhering to the carnal or *external* part of Scripture. Those who do so, shall not attain to the kingdom of God. Let us, therefore, seek after the spirit and the substantial fruit of the word, which are hidden and mysterious." And again; the Scriptures are of little use to those who understand them as they are written." One would think it impossible that such expressions should drop from the pen of a wise man. But the philosophy, which this great man embraced with such zeal, was one of the sources of his delusion. He could not find in the Bible the opinions he had adopted, as long as he interpreted that sacred book according to its literal sense. But Plato, Aristotle, Zeno, and indeed the whole philosophical tribe, could not fail to obtain, for their sentiments, a place in the gospel, when it was interpreted by the wanton inventions of fancy, and upon the supposition of a *hidden sense*, to which it was possible to give all sorts of forms. Hence all who desired to model Christianity according to their fancy, or their favourite system of philosophy, embraced Origen's method of interpretation.

ed concerning Victorinus's *explications* of certain books of the Old and New Testament, though these explications are long since lost. 'The *translation of the Ecclesiastes* by Gregory Thaumaturgus, which is yet remaining, is not chargeable with this reproach, notwithstanding the tender and warm attachment of its author to Origen. 'The book of *Genesis* and the *Song of Solomon* were explained by Methodius, whose work is lost; and Ammonius composed a *Harmony of the Gospels*.

VII. The doctrinal part of theology employed the pens of many learned men in this century. In his *Stromata*, and his *four books of Elements*, Origen Didactic writers in theology. illustrated the greatest part of the doctrines of Christianity, or, to speak more properly, rather disguised them under the lines of a vain philosophy. 'These books of *elements* or *principles*, were the first sketch that appeared of the *scholastic* or *philosophical theology*. Something of the same nature was attempted by Theognostus, in his *seven books of Hypotyposes*, which are only known at present by the extracts of them in Photius, who represents them as the work of one who was infected with the notions of Origen. Gregory Thaumaturgus drew up a brief summary of the Christian religion, in his *Exposition of the faith*; and many treated, in a more ample manner, particular points of doctrine in opposition to the enemies and corrupters of Christianity. Thus Hippolytus wrote concerning the *Deity*, the *resurrection*, *antichrist*, and the *end of the world*; Methodius, concerning *freewill*; and Lucian, concerning *faith*. It is doubtful in what class these productions are to be placed, as the most of them have perished among the ruins of time.

VIII. Among the moral writers, the first place, after Tertullian, of whom we have already spoken Moral writers. above, is due to Cyprian, a prelate of eminent merit, who published several treatises concerning *patience*, *mortality*, *works*, *alms*, as also an *exhortation to martyrdom*. In these dissertations, there are many excellent things; but there runs through them all a general want of order, precision, and method; nor do we always find solid proofs in favour of the decisions they contain.' Origen has written many treatises of this kind, and among others an *exhortation* to suffer martyrdom for the truth; a subject

i See Barbeyrac. *De la Morale des Peres*, ch. viii. p. 104.

handled by many authors in this century, but with unequal eloquence and penetration. Methodius treated of *chastity*, in a work entitled, *Symposium Virginum*, or, the *Feast of Virgins*; but this treatise is full of confusion and disorder. Dionysius handled the doctrine of *penance* and *temptations*. The other moral writers of this period are too obscure and trivial to render the mention of them necessary.

IX. The controversial writers were exceeding numerous in this century. The pagans were attacked, and that in a victorious manner, by Minucius Felix, in his dialogue called *Octavius*; by Origen, in his writings against Celsus; by Arnobius, in his *seven books against the Gentiles*; and Cyprian, in his treatise concerning the *vanity of idols*. The *chronicle* of Hippolytus, in opposition to the Gentiles; and the work of Methodius against Porphyry, that bitter adversary of the Christians, are both lost.

We may also reckon, in the number of the Polemic writers, those who wrote against the philosophers, or who treated any subjects that were disputed between different sects. Such was Hippolytus, who wrote against Plato, and who also treated the nicest, the most difficult, and the most controverted subjects, such as *fate*, *freewill*, and the *origin of evil*, which exercised, likewise, the pens of Methodius and other acute writers. What Hippolytus wrote against the Jews, is not come down to our times; but the work of Cyprian, upon that subject, yet remains.^k Origen, Victorinus, Hippolytus, attacked, in general, all various sects and heresies that divided the church; but their labours in that immense field, have entirely disappeared; and as to those, who only turned their controversial arms against some few sects, and certain particular doctrines, we think it not necessary to enumerate them here.

X. It is, however, necessary to observe, that the methods now used of defending Christianity, and attacking Judaism and idolatry, degenerated much from the primitive simplicity, and the true rule of controversy. The Christian doctors, who had been educated in the schools of the rhetoricians and sophists, rashly employed the arts and evasions of their subtle masters in the service of Christianity; and, intent only upon defeating the enemy, they were too little attentive to the means of vic-

^k The vicious method of controversy now employed.

^k This work is entitled, *Testimonia contra Judæos*.

tory, indifferent whether they acquired it by artifice or plain dealing. This method of disputing, which the ancients called *economical*,¹ and which had victory for its object, rather than truth, was, in consequence of the prevailing taste for rhetoric and sophistry, almost universally approved. The Platonists contributed to the support and encouragement of this ungenerous method of disputing, by that maxim of theirs which asserted the innocence of defending the truth by artifice and falsehood. This will appear manifest to those who have read, with any manner of penetration and judgment, the arguments of Origen against Celsus, and those of the other Christian disputants against the idolatrous Gentiles. The method of Tertulian, who used to plead prescription against erroneous doctors, was not, perhaps, unfair in this century; but they must be much unacquainted both with the times, and, indeed, with the nature of things, who imagine that it is always allowable to employ this method.^m

xi. This disingenuous and vicious method of surprising their adversaries by artifice, and striking them down, as it were, by lies and fictions, produced, among other disagreeable effects, a great number of books, which were falsely attributed to certain great men, in order to give these spurious productions more credit and weight. For, as the greatest part of mankind are less governed by reason than by authority, and prefer, in many cases, the decisions of fallible mortals to the unerring dictates of the divine word, the disputants, of whom we are now speaking, thought they could not serve the truth more effectually than by opposing illustrious names and respectable authorities to the attacks of its adversaries. Hence, the book of *canons*, which certain artful men ascribed falsely to the apostles; hence, the *apostolical constitutions*, of which Clement, bishop of Rome, is said to have formed a collection; hence the *recognitions* and

Supposititious
or spurious
writings.

¹ *Souverain Platonisme dévoilé*, p. 244. Daille, *De vet. usu Patrum*, lib. i. p. 160. Jo. Christoph. Wolfii *Casauboniana*, p. 100. Concerning the famous rule, *to do a thing xxv' οικονομιαν*, or *economically*; see particularly the ample illustrations of Gataker, *ad Marci Antonini*, lib. xi. p. 330, &c.

[^m] We scarcely know any case, in which the plea of *prescription* can be admitted as a satisfactory argument in favour of religious tenets, or articles of faith, unless by *prescription* be meant, a doctrine's being established in the time and by the authority of the apostles. In all other cases, *prescription* is no argument at all; it cannot recommend error, and truth has no need of its support.

the *clementina*, which are also attributed to Clement,ⁿ and many other productions of that nature, which, for a long time, were too much esteemed by credulous men.

Nor were the managers of controversy the only persons who employed these stratagems; the mystics had recourse to the same pious frauds to support their sect. And, accordingly, when they were asked from what chief their establishment took its rise, to get clear of this perplexing question, they feigned a chief, and chose, for that purpose, Dionysius the Areopagite, a man of almost apostolical weight and authority, who was converted to Christianity, in the first century, by the preaching of St. Paul at Athens. And to render this fiction more specious, they attributed to this great man various treatises concerning the *monastic life*, the *mystic theology*, and other subjects of that nature, which were the productions of some senseless and insipid writers of after times. Thus it happened, through the pernicious influence of human passions, which too often mingle themselves with the execution of the best purposes and the most upright intentions, that they, who were desirous of surpassing all others in piety, looked upon it as lawful, and even laudable, to advance the cause of piety by artifice and fraud.

XII. The most famous controversies that divided the Christians during this century, were those concerning the *millennium*, or *reign of a thousand years*, the *baptism of heretics*, and the *doctrine of Origen*. Long before this period, an opinion had prevailed that Christ was to come and reign a thousand years among men, before the entire and final dissolution of this world. This opinion, which had hitherto met with no opposition, was differently interpreted by different persons; nor did all promise themselves the same kind of enjoyments in that future and glorious kingdom.^o But in this century its credit began to decline, principally through the influence and au-

ⁿ It is not with the utmost accuracy that Dr. Mosheim places the *recognitions* among the spurious works of antiquity, since they are quoted by Origen, Epiphanius, and Ruffin, as the work of Clement. It is true indeed, that these writers own them to have been altered in several places, and falsified by the heretics; and Epiphanius particularly tells us, that the Ebionites scarcely left any thing sound in them. As to the *Clementina*, they were undoubtedly spurious.

^o See the learned treatise concerning the true millennium, which Dr. Whitby has subjoined to the second volume of his *Commentary upon the New Testament*. See also, for an account of the doctrine of the ancient Millenarians, the fourth, fifth, seventh, and ninth volumes of Lardner's *Credibility*, &c.

thority of Origen, who opposed it with the greatest warmth, because it was incompatible with some of his favourite sentiments.^p Nepos, an Egyptian bishop, endeavoured to restore this opinion to its former credit, in a book written *against the allegorists*, for so he called, by way of contempt, the adversaries of the Millenarian system. This work, and the hypothesis it defended, was extremely well received by great numbers in the canton of Arsinoe; and among others by Colacion, a presbyter of no mean influence and reputation. But Dionysius of Alexandria, a disciple of Origen, stopped the growing progress of this doctrine by his private discourse, and also by two learned and judicious dissertations concerning the *divine promises*.^q

XIII. The disputes concerning the *baptism of heretics* were not carried on with that amiable spirit of candour, moderation, and impartiality with which Concerning the baptism of heretics. Dionysius opposed the Millenarian doctrine. The warmth and violence that were exerted in this controversy, were far from being edifying to such as were acquainted with the true genius of Christianity, and with that meekness and forbearance that should particularly distinguish its doctors.

As there was no express law which determined the manner and form, according to which those who abandoned the heretical sects were to be received into the communion of the church, the rules practised in this matter were not the same in all Christian churches. Many of the oriental and African Christians placed recanting heretics in the rank of catechumens, and admitted them, by *baptism*, into the communion of the faithful; while the greatest part of the European churches, considering the baptism of heretics as valid, used no other forms in their reception than the *imposition of hands*, accompanied with solemn prayer. This diversity prevailed for a long time without kindling contentions or animosities. But, at length, charity waxed cold, and the fire of ecclesiastical discord broke out. In this century, the Asiatic Christians came to a determination in a point that was hitherto, in some measure, undecided; and in more than one council established it as a law, that all heretics were to be rebaptized before their admission to the

^p See Origen, *De Principiis*, lib. ii. cap. xi. p. 104, tom. i. opp.

^q See Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.* lib. vii. cap. xxiv. p. 271: as also Guenadius, *De dogmatibus Ecclesiasticis*, cap. lv. p. 32, edit. Elmenhorst.

communion of the true church.' When Stephen, bishop of Rome, was informed of this determination, he behaved with the most unchristian violence and arrogance toward the Asiatic Christians, broke communion with them, and excluded them from the communion of the church of Rome. These haughty proceedings made no impression upon Cyprian bishop of Carthage, who, notwithstanding the menaces of the Roman pontiff, assembled a council on this occasion, adopted, with the rest of the African bishops, the opinion of the Asiatics, and gave notice thereof to the imperious Stephen. The fury of the latter was redoubled at this notification, and produced many threatenings and invectives against Cyprian, who replied, with great force and resolution, and in a second council held at Carthage, declared the baptism, administered by heretics, void of all efficacy and validity. Upon this, the choler of Stephen swelled beyond measure, and, by a decree full of invectives, which was received with contempt, he excommunicated the African bishops, whose moderation, on the one hand, and the death of their imperious antagonist on the other, put an end to the violent controversy.^s

xiv. The controversy concerning Origen was set in motion by Demetrius, bishop of Alexandria, animated, as some say, by a principle of envy and hatred against this learned man, with whom he had formerly lived in an intimate friendship. The assertion, however, of those who attribute the opposition of Demetrius to this odious principle, appears something more than doubtful; for in the whole of his conduct toward Origen, there are no visible marks of envy, though many indeed of passion and arrogance, of violence and injustice. The occasion of all this was as follows: in the year 228, Origen having set out for Achaia, was, in his journey thither, received with singular marks of affection and esteem by the bishops of Cæsarea and Jerusalem, who ordained him *presbyter* by imposition of hands. This proceeding gave high offence to Demetrius, who declared Origen unworthy of the priesthood, because he had castrated himself, and maintained, at the same time, that it was not

^r Euseb. *Hist. Eccles.* lib. vii. cap. v. vii. Firmilianus, *Epistol. ad Cyprianum*, printed among Cyprian's *Letters*, lett. lxxv.

^s Cyprian, *Epist.* lxx. p. 124, lxxiii. p. 129. Augustin. *De Baptismo contra Donatistas*, lib. v. vii. tom. ix. opp. where are to be found the acts of the council of Carthage, A.D. 256. Prud. Marani *vita Cypriani*, p. 107.

lawful to advance, to a higher dignity, the principal of the Alexandrian school, which was under his episcopal inspection, without his knowledge and approbation. A conclusion, however, was put to these warm debates, and Origen returned to Alexandria. This calm was, indeed, but of a short duration, being soon succeeded by a new breach between him and Demetrius, the occasion of which is not known, but which grew to such a height as obliged Origen, in the year 231, to abandon his charge at Alexandria, and retire to Cæsarea. His absence, however, did not appease the resentment of Demetrius, who continued to persecute him with the utmost violence. To satisfy fully his vengeance against Origen, he assembled two councils, in the first of which he condemned him unheard, and deprived him of his office; and in the second, had him degraded from the sacerdotal dignity. It is probable, that in one of these councils, especially the latter, Demetrius accused him of erroneous sentiments in matters of religion; for it was about this time that Origen published his *book of principles*; which contains several opinions of a dangerous tendency.^t The greatest part of the Christian bishops approved of the proceedings of the Alexandrian council, against which the bishops of the churches of Achaia, Palestine, Phœnicia, and Arabia, declared at the same time the highest displeasure.^u

^t This work, which was a sort of introduction to theology, has only come down to us in the translation to Ruffinus, who corrected and maimed it, in order to render it more conformable to the orthodox doctrine of the church than Origen had left it. It contains, however, even in its present form, several bold and singular opinions, such as the pre-existence of souls, and their fall into mortal bodies, in consequence of their deviation from the laws of order in their first state, and the final restoration of all intelligent beings to order and happiness. Ruffinus, in his apology for Origen, alleges, that his writings were maliciously falsified by the heretics; and that, in consequence thereof, many errors were attributed to him, which he did not adopt; as also, that the opinions, in which he differed from the doctrines of the church, were only proposed by him as curious conjectures.

^u The accounts here given of the persecution of Origen, are drawn from the most early and authentic sources, such as Euseb. *Hist. Eccles.* lib. vi. cap. xxiv. Photius, *Bibl. Cod.* cxviii. Jerom's *Catalogue of Ecclesiastical Writers*, and from Origen himself; and they differ in some respects, from those, which common writers, such as Doucin, Huet, and others, give of this matter.

CHAPTER IV.

CONCERNING THE RITES AND CEREMONIES USED IN THE CHURCH DURING THIS CENTURY.

I. ALL the records of this century mention the multiplication of rites and ceremonies in the Christian church. ^{Rites multiplied.} Several of the causes that contributed to this have been already pointed out; to which we may add, as a principal one, the passion which now reigned for the Platonic philosophy, or rather for the popular oriental superstition concerning *demons*, adopted by the Platonists, and borrowed, unhappily, from them, by the Christian doctors. For there is not the least doubt, but that many of the rites, now introduced into the church, derived their origin from the reigning opinions concerning the nature of *demons*, and the *powers* and *operations* of *invisible beings*. Hence the use of *exorcisms* and *spells*, the frequency of *fasts*, and the aversion to *wedlock*. Hence the custom of avoiding all connexions with those who were not as yet baptized, or who lay under the penalty of excommunication, as persons supposed to be under the dominion of some malignant spirit. And hence the rigour and severity of that discipline and penance that were imposed upon those who had incurred, by their immoralities, the censures of the church.^w

II. In most of the provinces there were, at this time, ^{Public worship.} certain fixed places set apart for public worship among the Christians, as will appear evident to every impartial inquirer into these matters. Nor is it absolutely improbable, that these churches were, in several places, embellished with images and other ornaments.

With respect to the form of divine worship, and the times appointed for its celebration, there were little innovations made in this century. Two things, however, deserve to be taken notice of here; the first is, that the discourses or sermons, addressed to the people, were very different from those of the earlier times of the church, and degenerated much from the ancient simplicity. For, not to say any

^w For an ampler account of this matter, the reader may consult Porphyry's treatise concerning *Abstinence*, and compare what that writer has said on the subject, with the customs received among the Christians. Several curious things are also to be found in Theodoret and Eusebius upon this head.

thing of Origen, who introduced long sermons, and was the first who explained the Scriptures in his discourses, several bishops, who had received their education in the schools of the rhetoricians, were exactly scrupulous, in adapting their public exhortations and discourses to the rules of Grecian eloquence. And this method gained such credit, as to be soon, almost universally followed. The second thing that we proposed to mention as worthy of notice is, that about this time, the use of *incense* was introduced, at least, into many churches. This has been denied by some men of eminent learning; the fact, however, is rendered evident, by the most unexceptionable testimonies.*

III. Several alterations were now introduced, in the celebration of the Lord's supper, by those who had the direction of divine worship. The prayers, Administration of the Lord's Supper used upon this occasion, were lengthened; and the solemnity and pomp, with which this important institution was celebrated, were considerably increased; no doubt, with a pious intention to render it still more respectable. Those who were in a *penitential state*, and those also who had not received the sacrament of baptism, were not admitted to this holy supper; and it is not difficult to perceive, that these exclusions were an imitation of what was practised in the heathen mysteries. We find, by the accounts of Prudentius^v and others, that gold and silver vessels were now used in the administration of the Lord's supper; nor is there any reason why we should not adopt this opinion, since it is very natural to imagine, that those churches, which were composed of the most opulent members, would readily indulge themselves in this piece of religious pomp. As to the time of celebrating this solemn ordinance, it must be carefully observed, that there was a considerable variation in different churches, arising from their different circumstances, and founded upon reasons of prudence and necessity. In some, it was celebrated in the morning; in others, at noon; and in others, in the evening. It was also more frequently repeated in some churches, than in others; but it was considered in all as of the highest importance, and as essential to salvation; for which reason it was even thought proper to administer it to infants.

* See bishop Beverege *ad Canon. iii. Apostol.* p. 461; as also another work of the same author, entitled, *Codex Canon vindicatus*, p. 78.

^v Περὶ τρώων. *Hymn ii.* p. 60, edit. Heinsii.

The sacred feasts, that accompanied this venerable institution, preceded its celebration in some churches, and followed it in others.

IV. There were, twice a year, stated times, when baptism was administered to such as, after a long course of trial and preparation, offered themselves as candidates for the profession of Christianity. This ceremony was performed only in the presence of such as were already initiated into the Christian mysteries. The remission of sins was thought to be its immediate and happy fruit; while the bishop, by prayer and the imposition of hands, was supposed to confer those sanctifying gifts of the Holy Ghost, that are necessary to a life of righteousness and virtue.^z We have already mentioned the principal rites that were used in the administration of baptism; and we have only to add, that none were admitted to this solemn ordinance, until, by the menacing and formidable shouts and declamation of the *exorcist*, they had been delivered from the dominion of the prince of darkness, and consecrated to the service of God. The origin of this superstitious ceremony may be easily traced, when we consider the prevailing opinions of the times. The Christians, in general, were persuaded, that rational souls, deriving their existence from God, must consequently be in themselves pure, holy, and endowed with the noble principles of liberty and virtue. But upon this supposition, it was difficult to account for the corrupt propensities and actions of men, any other way, than by attributing them either to the malignant nature of *matter*, or the influence and impulse of some *evil spirit*, who was perpetually compelling them to sin. The former of these opinions was embraced by the gnostics, but was rejected by true Christians, who denied the eternity of matter, considered it as a creature of God, and therefore adopted the latter notion, that in all vicious persons there was a certain *evil being*, the author and source of their corrupt dispositions and their unrighte-

^z That such was the notion prevalent at this time, is evident from testimonies of sufficient weight. And as this point is of great consequence in order to our understanding the theology of the ancients, which differs from ours in many respects, we shall mention one of these testimonies, even that of Cyprian, who in his lxxiii. letter expresses himself thus: "It is manifest where, and by whom, the *remission of sins*, which is *conferred in baptism*, is administered. They who are presented to the rulers of the church, *obtain*, by our prayers and imposition of hands, the Holy Ghost." See also Euseb. *Hist. Eccles.* lib. vii. cap. viii.

ous deeds.^a The driving out this *demon* was now considered as an essential preparation for baptism, after the administration of which, the candidates returned home, adorned with crowns, and arrayed in white garments, as sacred emblems; the former of their victory over sin and the world; the latter of their inward purity and innocence.

v. *Fasting* began now to be held in more esteem than it had formerly been; a high degree of sanctity ^{Fasting.} was attributed to this practice, and it was even looked upon as of indispensable necessity, from a notion that the *demons* directed their stratagems principally against those who pampered themselves with delicious fare, and were less troublesome to the lean and the hungry, who lived under the severities of a rigorous abstinence.^b The Latins, contrary to the general custom, fasted the seventh day of the week; and as the Greeks and orientals refused to follow their example here, this afforded a new subject of contention between them.

The Christians offered up their ordinary prayers at three stated times of the day, viz. at the *third*, the *sixth*, and the *ninth hour*, according to the cus- ^{Prayers.} tom observed among the Jews. But besides these stated devotions, true believers were assiduous in their addresses to the Supreme Being, and poured forth frequently their vows and supplications before his throne, because they considered prayer as the most essential duty, as well as the noblest employment, of a sanctified nature. At those festivals, which recalled the memory of some joyful event, and were to be celebrated with expressions of thanksgiving and praise, they prayed standing, as they thought that posture the fittest to express their joy and their confidence. On days of contrition and fasting, they presented themselves upon their knees before the throne of the Most High, to express their profound humiliation and self-abasement. Certain forms of prayer were, undoubtedly, used

^a It is demonstrably evident, that *exorcism* was added to the other baptismal rites in the third century, after the introduction of the Platonic philosophy into the church. For, before this time, we hear no mention made of it. Justin Martyr, in his *second apology*, and Tertullian, in his book concerning the *military crown*, give us an account of the ceremonies used in baptism during the second century, without any mention of *exorcism*. This is a very strong argument of its being posterior to these two great men; and is every way proper to persuade us, that it made its entrance into the Christian church in the third century, and probably first in Egypt.

^b Clementin. *Homil.* ix. § 9, p. 688. Porphy. *De abstinencia*, lib. iv. p. 417.

in many places both in public and in private ; but many also expressed their pious feelings in the natural effusions of an unpremeditated eloquence.

The *sign of the cross* was supposed to administer a victorious power over all sorts of trials and calamities, and was more especially considered as the surest defence against the snares and stratagems of malignant spirits. And hence it was, that no Christian undertook any thing of moment, without arming himself with the influence of this triumphant sign.

The sign of
the cross used
by Christians.

CHAPTER V.

CONCERNING THE DIVISIONS AND HERESIES THAT TROUBLED THE CHURCH DURING THIS CENTURY.

1. THE same sects that, in the former ages, had produced such disorder and perplexity in the Christian church, continued, in this, to create new troubles, and to form new divisions. The Montanists, Valentini-
 ans, Marcionites, and the other gnostics, continued still to draw out their forces, notwithstanding the repeated defeats they had met with ; and their *obstinacy* remained even when their *strength* was gone, as it often happens in religious controversy. Adelphius and Aquilinus, who were of the gnostic tribe, endeavoured to insinuate themselves and their doctrine into the esteem of the public, at Rome, and in other places in Italy.^c They were, however, opposed not only by the Christians, but also by Plotinus, the greatest Platonic philosopher of this age, who, followed by a numerous train of disciples, opposed these two chimerical teachers, and others of the same kind, with as much vigour and success as the most enlightened Christians could have done. The philosophical opinions which this faction entertained concerning the Supreme Being, the origin of the world, the nature of evil, and several other subjects, were entirely opposite to the doctrines of Plato. Hence the disciples of Jesus, and the followers of Plotinus, joined together their efforts against the progress of gnosticism ; and there is no doubt but that their united

Remain of
the ancien-
sects.

^c Porphyr. *vita Plotini*, cap. xvi. p. 118.

force soon destroyed the credit and authority of this fantastic sect, and rendered it contemptible in the estimation of the wise.^d

II. While the Christians were struggling with these corrupters of the truth, and upon the point of obtaining a complete and decisive victory, a new enemy, more vehement and odious than the rest, started up suddenly, and engaged in the contest. This was Manes, or Manichæus, as he sometimes is called by his disciples, by birth a Persian; educated among the magi, and himself one of that number, before he embraced the profession of Christianity. Instructed in all those arts and sciences, which the Persians, and the other neighbouring nations, held in the highest esteem, he had penetrated into the depths of astronomy in the midst of a rural life; studied the art of healing, and applied himself to painting and philosophy. His genius was vigorous and sublime, but redundant and ungoverned; and his mind, destitute of a proper temperature, seemed to border on fanaticism and madness. He was so adventurous as to attempt a coalition of the doctrine of the magi with the Christian system, or rather the explication of the one by the other; and in order to succeed in this audacious enterprise, he affirmed that Christ had left the doctrine of salvation unfinished and imperfect; and that he was the *comforter*; whom the departing Saviour had promised to his disciples to lead them to all truth. Many were deceived by the eloquence of this enthusiast, by the gravity of his countenance, and the innocence and simplicity of his manners; so that, in a short time, he formed a sect not utterly inconsiderable in point of number. He was put to death by Varanes I. king of the Persians; though historians are not agreed concerning the cause, the time, and the manner of his execution.^e

Manes and the
Manichæans.

^d Plotinus's book against the gnostics is extant in his works, *Ennead*, ii. lib. ix. p. 213.

^e Some allege that Manes, having undertaken to cure the son of the Persian monarch of a dangerous disease, by his medicinal art, or his miraculous power, failed in the attempt, precipitated the death of the prince, and thus incurring the indignation of the king his father, was put to a cruel death. This account is scarcely probable, as it is mentioned by none of the oriental writers cited by D'Herbelot, and as Bar Hebræus speaks of it in terms which show that it was only an uncertain rumour. The death of Manes is generally attributed to another cause by the oriental writers. They tell us, that Manes, after having been protected in a singular manner, by Hormizdas, who succeeded Sapor on the Persian throne, but who was not, however, able to defend him, at length, against the united hatred of the Christians, the magi, the Jews, and the Pagans, was shut

III. The doctrine of Manes, was a motley mixture of the tenets of Christianity with the ancient philosophy of the Persians, which he had been instructed in during his youth. He combined these two systems, and applied and accommodated to Jesus Christ the characters and actions which the Persians attributed to the god Mithras. The principal doctrines of Manes are comprehended in the following summary.

“There are two principles from which all things proceed; the one is a most *pure and subtile matter*, called *Light*; and the other a *gross and corrupt substance*, called *Darkness*. Each of these are subject to the dominion of a superintending Being, whose existence is from all eternity. The Being, who presides over the light, is called God; he that rules the *land of Darkness*, bears the title of *Hyle*, or *Demon*. The Ruler of the Light is supremely happy; and, in consequence thereof, benevolent and good; the Prince of Darkness is unhappy in himself; and, desiring to render others partakers of his misery, is evil and malignant. These two beings have produced an immense multitude of creatures, resembling themselves, and distributed them through their respective provinces.

iv. “The Prince of Darkness knew not, for a long series of ages, that Light existed in the universe; and no sooner perceived it, by the means of a war that was kindled in his dominions, than he bent his endeavours toward the subjecting it to his empire. The Ruler of the Light opposed to his efforts an army commanded by the *first man*, but not with the highest success; for the generals of the Prince of Darkness seized upon a considerable portion of the celestial elements, and of the Light itself, and mingled them in the mass of corrupt matter. The second general of the Ruler of the Light, whose name was the *living spirit*, made war with more success against the Prince of Darkness, but could not entirely disengage the pure particles of the celestial matter, from the corrupt mass through which they had been dispersed. The

up in a strong castle, which Hormizdas had erected between Bagdad and Suza, to serve him as a refuge against those who persecuted him on account of his doctrine. They add, that, after the death of Hormizdas, Varanes I. his successor, first protected Manes, but afterward gave him up to the fury of the magi, whose resentment against him was due to his having adopted the Sadducean principles, as some say; while others attributed it to his having mingled the tenets of the magi with the doctrines of Christianity.

Prince of Darkness, after his defeat, produced the first parents of the human race. The beings engendered from this original stock, consist of a body formed out of the corrupt matter of the kingdom of Darkness, and of two souls; one of which is *sensitive* and *lustful*, and owes its existence to the *evil principle*; the other *rational* and *immortal*, a particle of that divine Light, which was carried away by the army of Darkness, and immersed into the mass of malignant matter.

v. "Mankind being thus formed by the Prince of Darkness, and those minds, that were the productions of the eternal Light, being united to their mortal bodies, God created the earth out of the corrupt mass of matter, by that *living spirit*, who had vanquished the Prince of Darkness. The design of this creation was to furnish a dwelling for the human race, to deliver, by degrees, the captive souls from their corporeal prisons, and to extract the celestial elements from the gross substance in which they were involved. In order to carry this design into execution, God produced *two beings* of eminent dignity from his own substance, which were to lend their auspicious succours to imprisoned souls; one of these sublime entities was Christ; and the other, the Holy Ghost. Christ is that glorious intelligence, which the Persians called *Mithras*; he is a most splendid substance, consisting of the brightness of the eternal Light; subsisting in, and by himself; endowed with life; enriched with infinite wisdom; and his residence is in the sun. The Holy Ghost is also a luminous and animated body, diffused throughout every part of the atmosphere which surrounds this terrestrial globe. This *genial principle* warms and illuminates the minds of men, renders also the earth fruitful, and draws forth gradually from its bosom the latent particles of celestial fire, which it wafts up on high to their primitive station.

vi. "After that the Supreme Being had, for a long time, admonished and exhorted the captive souls, by the ministry of the angels and of holy men, raised up and appointed for that purpose, he ordered Christ to leave the solar regions, and to descend upon earth, in order to accelerate the return of those imprisoned spirits to their celestial country. In obedience to this divine command, Christ appeared among the Jews, clothed with the

Concerning
Christ and the
Holy Ghost.

Concerning
the office of
Christ.

shadowy form of a human body, and not with the real substance. During his ministry, he taught mortals how to disengage the rational soul from the corrupt body, to conquer the violence of malignant matter, and he demonstrated his divine mission by stupendous miracles. On the other hand, the Prince of Darkness used every method to inflame the Jews against this divine messenger, and incited them at length to put him to death upon an ignominious cross; which punishment, however, he suffered not in reality, but only in appearance, and in the opinion of men. When Christ had fulfilled the purposes of his mission, he returned to his throne in the sun, and appointed a certain number of chosen apostles to propagate through the world the religion he had taught during the course of his ministry. But, before his departure, he promised, that, at a certain period of time, he would send an apostle superior to all others in eminence and dignity, whom he called the *paraclete*, or *comforter*, who should add many things to the precepts he had delivered, and dispel all the errors under which his servants laboured concerning divine things. This *comforter*, thus expressly promised by Christ, is Manes, the Persian, who, by the order of the Most High, declared to mortals the whole doctrine of salvation, without exception, and without concealing any of its truths, under the veil of metaphor, or any other covering.

Concerning the purification of souls, and their future condition. VII. "Those souls, who believe Jesus Christ to be the Son of God, renounce the worship of the God of the Jews, who is the Prince of Darkness, obey the laws delivered by Christ as they are enlarged and illustrated by the *comforter*, Manes, and combat, with persevering fortitude, the lusts and appetites of a corrupt nature, derive from this faith and obedience the inestimable advantage of being gradually purified from the contagion of matter. The total purification of souls cannot indeed be accomplished during this mortal life. Hence it is, that the souls of men, after death, must pass through two states more of probation and trial, by *water* and *fire*, before they can ascend to the regions of Light. They mount, therefore, first into the moon, which consists of benign and salutary *water*; from whence, after a lustration of fifteen days, they proceed to the sun, whose purifying *fire* removes entirely all their corruption, and effaces all their stains. The bodies, composed of malignant matter, which

they have left behind them, return to their first state, and enter into their original mass.

VIII. "On the other hand, those souls who have neglected the salutary work of their purification, pass, after death, into the bodies of animals, or other Concerning the fate of unpurified souls. natures, where they remain until they have expiated their guilt, and accomplished their probation. Some, on account of their peculiar obstinacy and perverseness, pass through a severer course of trial, being delivered over, for a certain time, to the power of malignant aerial spirits, who torment them in various ways. When the greatest part of the captive souls are restored to liberty, and to the regions of light, then a devouring fire shall break forth, at the divine command, from the caverns in which it is at present confined, and shall destroy and consume the frame of the world. After this tremendous event, the Prince and *powers of darkness* shall be forced to return to their primitive seats of anguish and misery, in which they shall dwell for ever. For, to prevent their ever renewing this war in the regions of *light*, God shall surround the mansions of *Darkness* with an invincible guard, composed of those souls who have irrecoverably fallen from the hopes of salvation, and who, set in array, like a military band, shall surround those gloomy seats of wo, and hinder any of their wretched inhabitants from coming forth again to the *light*."

IX. In order to remove the strongest obstacles that lay against the belief of this monstrous system, Manes rejected almost all the sacred books in which The opinion of Manes concerning the Old and New Testaments. Christians look for the sublime truths of their holy religion. He affirmed, in the first place, that the Old Testament was not the word of God, but of the Prince of Darkness, who was substituted by the Jews in the place of the true God. He maintained further, that the *Four Gospels*, which contain the history of Christ, were not written by the apostles, or, at least, that they were corrupted and interpolated by designing and artful men, and were augmented with Jewish fables and fictions. He therefore supplied their place by a *gospel*, which he said was dictated to him by God himself, and which he distinguished by the title of *Erteng*. He rejected also the *Acts of the Apostles*; and though he acknowledged the *epistles* that are attributed to St. Paul, to be the productions of that divine apostle, yet he looked upon them as considerably corrupted and falsified in a variety of passages. We have not any cer-

tain account of the judgment he formed concerning the other books of the New Testament.

x. The rule of life and manners that Manes prescribed to his disciples was most extravagantly rigorous and austere. He commanded them to mortify and macerate the body, which he looked upon as *intrinsically* evil and *essentially* corrupt; to deprive it of all those objects which could contribute either to its convenience or delight; to extirpate all those desires that lead to the pursuit of external objects; and to divest themselves of all the passions and instincts of nature. Such was the unnatural rule of practice which this enormous fanatic prescribed to his followers; but foreseeing, at the same time, that his sect could not possibly become numerous, if this severe manner of living was to be imposed without distinction upon all his adherents, he divided his disciples into *two* classes; the *one* of which comprehended the perfect Christians, under the name of the *elect*; and the other, the imperfect and feeble, under the title of *hearers*. The *elect* were obliged to a rigorous and entire abstinence from flesh, eggs, milk, fish, wine, all intoxicating drink, wedlock, and all amorous gratifications; and to live in a state of the sharpest penury, nourishing their shrivelled and emaciated bodies with bread, herbs, pulse, and melons, and depriving themselves of all the comforts that arise from the moderate indulgence of natural passions, and also from a variety of innocent and agreeable pursuits. The discipline, appointed for the *hearers*, was of a milder nature. They were allowed to possess houses, lands, and wealth, to feed upon flesh, to enter into the bonds of conjugal tenderness; but this liberty was granted them with many limitations, and under the strictest conditions of moderation and temperance.

The general assembly of the Manicheans was headed by a president, who represented Jesus Christ. There were joined to him *twelve rulers*, or *masters*, who were designed to represent the *twelve apostles*; and these were followed by *seventy-two bishops*, the images of the *seventy-two disciples* of our Lord. These bishops had *presbyters* and *deacons* under them, and all the members of these religious orders were chosen out of the class of the *elect*.^f

^f See all this amply proved in the work entitled *Commentarii de rebus Christianorum ante Constantinum Magnum*.

XI. The sect of the Hieracites was formed in Egypt, towards the conclusion of this century, by Hierax of Leontium, a bookseller by profession, and distinguished eminently by his extensive learning, and a venerable air of sanctity and virtue. The sect of the Hieracites. Some have considered this as a branch of the Manichean sect, but without foundation; since notwithstanding the agreement of Manes and Hierax in some points of doctrine, it is certain that they differed in many respects. Hierax maintained that the principal object of Christ's office and ministry was the promulgation of a *new law*, more severe and perfect than that of Moses; and from hence he concluded, that the use of flesh, wine, wedlock, and of other things agreeable to the outward senses, which had been permitted under the Mosaic dispensation, was absolutely prohibited and abrogated by Christ. If, indeed, we look attentively into his doctrine, we shall find that, like Manes, he did not think that these austere acts of self-denial were imposed by Christ indiscriminately upon all, but on such only as were ambitious of aspiring to the highest summit of virtue. To this capital error he added many others, which were partly the consequences of this illusion, and were, in part, derived from other sources. He excluded, for example, from the kingdom of heaven, children who died before they had arrived to the use of reason, and that upon the supposition that God was bound to administer the rewards of futurity to those only who had fairly finished their victorious conflict with the body and its lusts. He maintained also, that Melchisedec, king of Salem, who blessed Abraham, was the Holy Ghost; denied the resurrection of the body, and cast a cloud of obscurity over the sacred Scriptures by his allegorical fictions.^g

XII. The controversies relating to the divine Trinity, which took their rise in the former century, from the introduction of the Grecian philosophy into the Christian church, were now spreading with considerable vigour, and producing various methods of explaining that inexplicable doctrine. One of the first who engaged in this idle and perilous attempt of explaining what every mortal must acknowledge to be incomprehensible, was Noetus of Smyrna, an obscure man, and of mean abilities. The Noetian controversy.

^g Epiphan. *Hæres.* lxxvii. *Hieracitarum*, p. 710, &c.

He affirmed, that the Supreme God, whom he called the *Father*, and considered as absolutely indivisible, united himself to the man Christ, whom he called the *Son*, and was born, and crucified with him. From this opinion, Noetus and his followers were distinguished by the title of Patripassians, i. e. persons who believe that the Supreme Father of the universe, and not any other divine person, had expiated the guilt of the human race. And, indeed, this appellation belongs to them justly, if the accounts which ancient writers give us of their opinions be accurate and impartial.^b

XIII. About the middle of this century arose Sabellius, an African bishop or presbyter, who, in Pentapolis, a province of Cyrenaica, and in Ptolemais, or Barce, its principal city, explained, in a manner very little different from that of Noetus, the doctrine of Scripture concerning the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. This dogmatist had a considerable number of followers, who adhered to him, notwithstanding that his opinions were refuted by Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria. His sentiments were, in some respects, different from those of Noetus; the latter was of opinion, that the *person* of the Father had assumed the human nature of Christ; whereas Sabellius maintained, that a certain *energy* only, proceeding from the Supreme Parent, or a certain portion of the divine nature, was united to the Son of God, and the man Jesus; and he considered, in the same manner, the *Holy Ghost*, as a portion of the everlasting Father.ⁱ From hence it appears, that the Sabellians, though they might with justice be called Patripassians, were yet called so, by the ancients, in a different sense from that in which this name was given to the Noetians.

XIV. At this same period, Beryllus an Arabian, bishop of Bozrah, and a man of eminent piety and learning, taught that Christ, before his birth, had no proper subsistence, nor any other divinity, than that of the

^b See the *Discourse of Hyppolytus against the heresy of Noetus*, in the second volume of his works, published by Fabricius. As also Epiphan. *Hæres.* lvii. tom. i. p. 479. Theodoret. *Hæret. Fabul.* lib. iii. cap. iii. p. 227, tom. iv. opp.

ⁱ Almost all the historians, who give accounts of the ancient heresies, have made particular mention of Sabellius. Among others, see Euseb. *Hist. Eccles.* lib. vi. cap. vi. p. 252. Athanas. *Libro de sententia Dionysii.* All the passages of the ancient authors, relating to Sabellius, are carefully collected by the learned Christopher Wormius in his *Historia Sabelliana*, printed in 8vo. at Francfort and Leipsic, 1696.

Father; which opinion, when considered with attention, amounts to this; that Christ did not exist before Mary, but that a *spirit* issuing from God himself, and therefore superior to all human souls, as being a portion of the divine nature, was united to him at the time of his birth. Beryllus, however, was refuted by Origen, with such a victorious power of argument and zeal, that he yielded up the cause, and returned into the bosom of the church.^k

xv. Paul of Samosata, bishop of Antioch, and also a magistrate or civil judge, was very different from the pious and candid Beryllus, both in point of ^{Paul of Samosata.} morals and doctrine. He was a vain and arrogant man, whom riches had rendered insolent and self-sufficient.^l He introduced much confusion and trouble into the eastern churches, by his new explication of the doctrine of the gospel concerning the nature of God and Christ, and left behind him a sect, that assumed the title of Paulians, or Paulianists. As far as we can judge of his doctrine by the accounts of it that have been transmitted to us, it seems to have amounted to this; “that the *Son* and the *Holy Ghost* exist in *God*, in the same manner as the faculties of *reason* and *activity* do in man; that Christ was born a mere man; but that the *reason* or *wisdom* of the Father descended into him, and by him wrought miracles upon earth, and instructed the nations; and finally, that on account of this union of the *divine word* with the *man* Jesus, Christ might, though improperly, be called *God*.”

Such were the real sentiments of Paul. He involved them, however, in such deep obscurity, by the ambiguous forms of speech he made use of to explain and defend them, that, after several meetings of the councils held to examine his errors, they could not convict him of heresy. At length, indeed, a council was assembled, in the year 269, in which Malchion, the rhetorician, drew him forth from his obscurity, detected his evasions, and exposed him in his true colours; in consequence of which he was degraded from the episcopal order.^m

^k Euseb. *Hist. Eccles.* lib. vi. cap. xx. p. 222, cap. xxxiii. p. 231. Hieronym. *Catalog. Scriptor. Eccles.* cap. lx. p. 137. Socrates, *Hist. Eccles.* lib. iii. cap. vii. p. 174; and among the moderns, Le Clerc, *Ars Criticæ*, vol. i. part ii. § i. cap. xiv. p. 293. Chauffepied, *Nouveau Diction. Hist. Crit.* tom. i. p. 268.

^l Euseb. *Hist. Eccles.* lib. vii. cap. xxx. p. 279.

^m in *Epistol. Concil. Antioch. ad Paulum in Bibliotheca Patrum*, tom. xi. p. 302. *Dionysii Alex. Ep. ad Paulum*, ib. p. 273. *Decem Pauli Samosatani Quæstiones*, ib. p. 278.

XVI. It was not only in the point now mentioned, that the doctrine of the Gospel suffered, at this time, from the erroneous fancies of wrong-headed doctors. For there sprung up now, in Arabia, a certain sort of minute philosophers, the disciples of a master, whose obscurity has concealed him from the knowledge of after ages, who denied the immortality of the soul, believed that it perished with the body; but maintained, at the same time, that it was to be again recalled to life with the body, by the power of God. The philosophers, who held this opinion, were called Arabians from their country. Origen was called from Egypt, to make head against this rising sect, and disputed against them, in a full council, with such remarkable success that they abandoned their erroneous sentiments, and returned to the received doctrine of the church.

XVII. Among the sects that arose in this century, we place that of the Novatians the last. This sect cannot be charged with having corrupted the doctrine of Christianity by their opinions; their crime was, that by the unreasonable severity of their discipline, they gave occasion to the most deplorable divisions, and made an unhappy rent in the church. Novatian, a presbyter of the church of Rome, a man also of uncommon learning and eloquence, but of an austere and rigid character, entertained the most unfavourable sentiments of those who had been separated from the communion of the church. He indulged his inclination to severity so far, as to deny that such as had fallen into the commission of grievous transgressions, especially those who had apostatized from the faith, under the persecution set on foot by Decius, were to be again received into the bosom of the church. The greatest part of the presbyters were of a different opinion in this matter, especially Cornelius, whose credit and influence were raised to the highest pitch by the esteem and admiration which his eminent virtues so naturally excited. Hence it happened, that when a bishop was to be chosen, in the year 250, to succeed Fabianus in the see of Rome, Novatian opposed the election of Cornelius with the greatest activity and bitterness. His opposition, however, was in vain, for Cornelius was chosen to that eminent office of which his distinguished merit rendered him so highly worthy. Novatian, upon this, separated himself from the jurisdiction of Cornelius, who, in his turn, called a council at Rome, in the year 251, and

Absurdities
of some Ara-
bian philoso-
phers.

The troubles
excited in the
church by the
Novatians.

cut off Novatian and his partisans from the communion of the church. This turbulent man, being thus excommunicated, erected a new society, of which he was the first bishop; and which, on account of the severity of its discipline, was followed by many, and flourished, until the fifth century, in the greatest part of those provinces which had received the gospel. The chief person who assisted Novatian in this enterprise, was Novatus, a Carthaginian presbyter, a man of no principles, who, during the heat of this controversy, had come from Carthage to Rome, to escape the resentment and excommunication of Cyprian, his bishop, with whom he was highly at variance.

XVIII. There was no difference in point of doctrine, between the Novatians and other Christians. What peculiarly distinguished them was, their refusing to readmit to the communion of the church, those who, after baptism, had fallen into the commission of heinous crimes, though they did not pretend, that even such were excluded from all possibility or hopes of salvation. They considered the Christian church as a society where virtue and innocence reigned universally, and none of whose members, from their entrance into it, had defiled themselves with any enormous crime; and, of consequence, they looked upon every society, which readmitted heinous offenders to its communion, as unworthy of the title of a true Christian church. It was from hence also, that they assumed the title of *Cathari*, i. e. the *pure*; and, what showed still a more extravagant degree of vanity and arrogance, they obliged such as came over to them from the general body of Christians, to submit to be baptized a second time, as a necessary preparation for entering into their society. For such deep root had their favourite opinion concerning the irrevocable rejection of heinous offenders taken in their minds, and so great was its influence upon the sentiments they entertained of other Christian societies, that they considered the baptism administered in those churches, which received the lapsed to their communion, even after the most sincere and undoubted repentance, as absolutely divested of the power of imparting the remission of sins.ⁿ

The severity
of the Nova-
tians against
the lapsed.

ⁿ Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.* lib. vi. cap. xliii. p. 242. Cyprianus *variis Epistolis*, xlix. lii. &c. Albaspinæus, *Observat. Eccles.* lib. ii. cap. xx. xxi. Jos. Aug. Orsi, *De criminum capital. inter veteres Christianos absolutione*, p. 254. Kenckel, *De hæc. Novatiana*.



IN
ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY.

BOOK THE SECOND.

CONTAINING

THE STATE OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

FROM THE TIME OF

CONSTANTINE THE GREAT

TO CHARLEMAGNE.



THE FOURTH CENTURY.

PART I.

EXTERNAL HISTORY OF THE CHURCH.

CHAPTER I.

CONCERNING THE PROSPEROUS AND CALAMITOUS EVENTS WHICH HAPPENED TO THE CHURCH DURING THIS CENTURY.

I. THAT I may not separate facts, which are intimately connected with each other, I have judged it expedient to combine, in the same chapter, the prosperous and calamitous events that happened to the church during this century, instead of treating them separately, as I have hitherto done. This combination, which presents things in their natural relations, as causes or effects, is, undoubtedly, the principal circumstance that renders history truly interesting. In following, however, this plan, the order of time shall also be observed with as much accuracy as this interesting combination of events will admit of.

In the beginning of this century, the Roman empire was under the dominion of four chiefs, of whom two, Dioclesian and Maximian Hercules, were of superior dignity, and were distinguished each by the title of Augustus; while the other two, viz. Constantius Chlorus and Maximinus Galerius, were in a certain degree of subordination to the former, and were honoured with the appellation of Cæsars. Under these four emperors, the church enjoyed an agreeable calm.^a Dioclesian, though much addicted to superstition, did not, however, entertain any aversion to the Christians; and Constantius Chlorus, who, following the dictates of right reason alone in the worship of the Deity, had abandoned the absurdities of polytheism, treated them with condescension and benevolence. This alarmed the pagan priests, whose interests were so closely connected with the continuance of the ancient superstitions, and who appre-

The church enjoys peace at the entrance of this century.

^a Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.* lib. viii. cap. i. p. 291, &c

hended, not without reason, that to their great detriment, the Christian religion would become daily more universal and triumphant throughout the empire. Under these anxious fears of the downfall of their authority, they addressed themselves to Dioclesian, whom they knew to be of a timorous and credulous disposition, and by fictitious oracles and other such perfidious stratagems, endeavoured to engage him to persecute the Christians.^b

II. Dioclesian, however, stood for some time, unmoved by the treacherous arts of a selfish and superstitious priesthood, who, when they perceived the ill success of their cruel efforts, addressed themselves to Maximinus Galerius, one of the Cæsars, and also son-in-law to Dioclesian, in order to accomplish their unrighteous purposes. This prince, whose gross ignorance of every thing but military affairs, was accompanied with a fierce and savage temper, was a proper instrument for executing their designs. Set on, therefore, by the malicious insinuations of the heathen priests, the suggestions of a superstitious mother, and the ferocity of his own natural disposition, he solicited Dioclesian with such indefatigable importunity, and in such an urgent manner, for an edict against the Christians, that he at length obtained his horrid purpose. For in the year 303, when this emperor was at Nicomedia, an order was obtained from him to pull down the churches of the Christians, to burn all their books and writings, and to take from them all their civil rights and privileges, and render them incapable of any honours or civil promotion.^c This first edict, though rigorous and severe, extended not to the lives of the Christians, for Dioclesian was extremely averse to slaughter and bloodshed; it was, however, destructive to many of them, particularly to those who refused to deliver the sacred books into the hands of the magistrates.^d Many Christians, therefore, and among them several bishops and presbyters, seeing the consequences of this refusal, delivered up all the religious books and other sacred things that were in their possession, in order to save their lives. This conduct was highly condemned by the

^b Eusebius, *De vita Constantini*, lib. ii. cap. 1, p. 467. Lactantii *Institut. divin.* lib. iv. cap. xxvii. p. 393. Idem, *De mortibus persecutor.* cap. x. p. 943, edit. Heumann.

^c Lactantius, *De mortibus persecutor.* c. xi. p. 944. Eusebius, *Histor. Eccles.* lib. viii. cap. ii. p. 293, &c.

^d Augustinus, *Breviculo collat. cum Donatistis*, cap. xv. xvii. p. 387, 390, tom. ix. opp. Baluzii *Miscellan.* tom. ii. p. 77, 92.

most steady and resolute Christians, who looked upon this compliance as sacrilegious, and branded those who were guilty of it with the ignominious appellation of *traditors*.^c

III. Not long after the publication of this first edict against the Christians, a fire broke out, at two different times, in the palace of Nicomedia, where Galerius lodged with Dioclesian. The Christians were The causes and severity of this persecution- accused by their enemies, as the authors of this ;^f and the credulous Dioclesian, too easily persuaded of the truth of this charge, caused vast numbers of them to suffer at Nicomedia the punishment of incendiaries, and to be tormented in the most inhuman and infamous manner.^g About the same time, there arose certain tumults and seditions in Armenia and in Syria, which were also attributed to the Christians by their irreconcilable enemies, and dexterously made use of to arm against them the emperor's fury. And accordingly Dioclesian, by a new edict, ordered all the bishops and ministers of the Christian church to be cast into prison. Nor did his inhuman violence end here ; for a third edict was soon issued out, by which it was ordered, that all sorts of torments should be employed, and the most insupportable punishments invented to force these venerable captives to renounce their profession by sacrificing to the heathen gods ;^h for it was hoped, that, if the bishops and doctors of the church could be brought to yield, their respective flocks would be easily induced to follow their example. An immense number of persons, illustriously distinguished by their piety and learning, became the victims of this cruel stratagem throughout the whole Roman empire, Gaul excepted, which was under the mild and equitable dominion of Constantius Chlorus.ⁱ Some were punished in such a shameful manner, as the rules of decency oblige us to pass in silence ; some were put to death after having had their constancy tried by tedious and inexpressible tortures ; and some were sent to the mines to

^c Optatus Milevit. *De Schismate Donatistar.* lib. i § xiii. p. 13, &c. edit. Pinian.

^f Lactantius assures us, that Galerius caused fire to be privately set to the palace, that he might lay the blame of it upon the Christians, and by that means incense Dioclesian still more against them ; in which horrid stratagem he succeeded, for never was any persecution so bloody and inhuman, as that which this credulous emperor now set on foot against them.

^g Euseb. *Hist. Eccles.* lib. viii. cap. vi. p. 297. Lactant. *De mortibus persecut.* cap. xiv. p. 948. Constantinus M. *Oratio ad sanctos.* cœlum, cap. xxv. p. 601.

^h Euseb. *Hist. Eccles.* lib. viii. cap. vii. p. 298. Idem, *De Martyribus Palestinæ.*

ⁱ Lactantius, *De mortibus persecut.* cap. xv. p. 951. Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.* lib. viii cap. xiii. p. 309, cap. xviii. p. 317.

draw out the remains of a miserable life in poverty and bondage.

iv. In the second year of this horrible persecution, the 304th of the Christian era, a fourth edict was published by Dioclesian, at the instigation of Galerius, and the other inveterate enemies of the Christian name. By it the magistrates were ordered and commissioned to force all Christians, without distinction of rank or sex, to sacrifice to the gods, and were authorized to employ all sorts of torments in order to drive them to this act of apostacy.^k The diligence and zeal of the Roman magistrates, in the execution of this inhuman edict, had liked to have proved fatal to the Christian cause.^l

The affairs of the Christians reduced to a dangerous crisis.

Galerius now made no longer a mystery of the ambitious project he had been revolving in his mind. Finding his scheme ripe for execution, he obliged Dioclesian and Maximian Hercules to resign the imperial dignity, and declared himself emperor of the east; leaving in the west Constantius Chlorus, with the ill state of whose health he was well acquainted. He chose colleagues, according to his own fancy, and rejecting the proposal of Dioclesian, who recommended Maxentius, and Constantine the son of Constantius to that dignity, his choice fell upon Severus and Daza, his sister's son, to whom he had, a little before, given the name of Maximin.^m This revolution restored peace to those Christians who lived in the western provinces, under the administration of Constantius;ⁿ while those of the east, under the tyranny of Galerius, had their sufferings and calamities dreadfully augmented.^o

v. The Divine Providence, however, was preparing more serene and happy days for the church. In order to this, it confounded the schemes of Galerius, and brought his counsels to nothing. In the year 306, Constantius Chlorus dying in Britain, the army saluted with the title of Augustus, his son Constantine, surnamed afterward the Great on account of his illustrious exploits, and forced him to accept the purple. This proceeding, which must have stung the tyrant Galerius to the heart, he was, nevertheless, obliged to bear with patience, and even to confirm with the outward marks

The tranquillity of the church restored by the accession of Constantine to the empire.

^k Eusebius, *De martyribus Palestinæ*, cap. iii. p. 321, &c.

^l Lactantius, *Institut. divin.* lib. v. cap. xi. p. 449.

^m Lactant. *De mortibus persecut.* cap. xvii. p. 954, cap. xx. p. 961.

ⁿ Euseb. *De mortyribus Palestinæ*, cap. xiii. p. 345.

^o Lactant. *De mortibus persecut.* cap. xxi. p. 964.

of his approbation. Soon after a civil war broke out, the occasion of which was as follows; Maximin Galerius, inwardly enraged at the election of Constantine by the soldiers, sent him indeed the purple, but gave him only the title of Cæsar, and created Severus emperor. Maxentius, the son of Maximian Herculeus, and son-in-law to Galerius, provoked at the preference given to Severus, assumed the imperial dignity, and found the less difficulty in making good this usurpation, as the Roman people hoped by his means, to deliver themselves from the insupportable tyranny of Galerius. Having caused himself to be proclaimed emperor, he chose his father Maximian for his colleague, who receiving the purple from the hands of his son, was universally acknowledged in that character by the senate and the people. Amidst all these troubles and commotions, Constantine, beyond all human expectation, made his way to the imperial throne.

The western Christians, those of Italy and Africa excepted,^p enjoyed a tolerable degree of tranquillity and liberty during these civil tumults. Those of the east seldom continued for any considerable time in the same situation; subject to various changes and revolutions, their condition was sometimes adverse and sometimes tolerably easy, according to the different scenes that were presented by the fluctuating state of public affairs. At length, however, Maximin Galerius, who had been the author of their heaviest calamities, being brought to the brink of the grave by a most dreadful and lingering disease,^q whose complicated horrors no language can express, published in the year 311, a solemn edict, ordering the persecution to cease, and restoring freedom and repose to the Christians, against whom he had exercised such unheard-of cruelties.^r

VI. After the death of Galerius, his dominions fell into the hands of Maximin and Licinius, who divided between them the provinces he had possessed. At the same time, Maxentius, who had usurped the

and by the defeat of Maxentius.

^p The reason of this exception is, that the provinces of Italy and Africa, though nominally under the government of Severus, were yet in fact ruled by Galerius with an iron sceptre.

^q See a lively description of the disease of Galerius in the *Universal History*, vol. xv. p. 359, of the Dublin edition.

^r Euseb. *Hist. Eccles.* lib. viii. cap. xvi. p. 314. Lactantius, *De mortibus persecut.* cap. xxviii. p. 981.

government of Africa and Italy, determined to make war upon Constantine ; who was now master of Spain and the Gauls, and this with the ambitious view of reducing, under his dominion, the whole western empire. Constantine, apprised of this design, marched with a part of his army into Italy, gave battle to Maxentius at a small distance from Rome, and defeated totally that abominable tyrant, who, in his precipitate flight, fell into the Tiber, and was drowned. After this victory, which happened in the year 312, Constantine, and his colleague Licinius, immediately granted to the Christians a full power of living according to their own laws and institutions ; which power was specified still more clearly in another edict, drawn up at Milan, in the following year.^s Maximin, indeed, who ruled in the east, was preparing new calamities for the Christians, and threatening also with destruction the western emperors. But his projects were disconcerted by the victory which Licinius gained over his army, and through distraction and despair, he ended his life by poison, in the year 313.

VII. About the same time, Constantine the Great, who had hitherto discovered no religious principles of any kind, embraced Christianity, in consequence, as it is said, of a *miraculous cross*, which appeared to him in the air, as he was marching toward Rome to attack Maxentius. But that this extraordinary event was the reason of his conversion, is a matter that has never yet been placed in such a light, as to dispel all doubts and difficulties. For the first edict of Constantine in favour of the Christians, and many other circumstances that might be here alleged, show indeed, that he was well disposed to them and to their worship, but are no proof that he looked upon Christianity as the only true religion ; which, however, would have been the natural effect of a miraculous conversion. It appears evident, on the contrary, that this emperor considered the other religions, and particularly that which was handed down from the ancient Romans, as also true and useful to mankind ; and declared it as his intention and desire, that they should all be exercised and professed in the empire, leaving to each individual the liberty of adhering to that which he thought the best. Constantine, it is true, did not remain always in this

Different
opinions con-
cerning the
faith of Con-
stantine.

^s Euseb. *Hist. Eccles.* lib. x. cap. v. p. 388. Lactantius, *De mortibus persecut.* cap. xlviii. p. 1007.

state of indifference. In process of time, he acquired more extensive views of the excellence and importance of the Christian religion, and gradually arrived at an entire persuasion of its bearing alone the sacred marks of celestial truth, and of a divine origin. He was convinced of the falsehood and impiety of all other religious institutions ; and acting in consequence of this conviction, he exhorted earnestly all his subjects to embrace the gospel ; and at length employed all the force of his authority in the abolition of the ancient superstition. It is not indeed easy, nor perhaps possible, to fix precisely the time when the religious sentiments of Constantine were so far changed, as to render all religions, but that of Christ, the objects of his aversion. All that we know, with certainty, concerning this matter is, that this change was first published to the world by the laws and edicts' which this emperor issued out in the year 324, when, after the defeat and death of Licinius, he reigned, without a colleague, sole lord of the Roman empire. His designs, however, with respect to the abolition of the ancient religion of the Romans, and the tolerating no other form of worship but the Christian, were only made known toward the latter end of his life, by the edicts he issued out for destroying the heathen temples, and prohibiting sacrifices."

VIII. The sincerity of Constantine's zeal for Christianity can scarcely be doubted, unless it be maintained, that the outward actions of men are, in no degree, a proof of their inward sentiments. It must indeed be confessed, that the life and actions of this prince were not such as the Christian religion demands from those who profess to believe its sublime doctrines. It is also certain, that, from his conversion to the last period of his life, he continued in the state of a *catechumen*, and was not received by baptism into the number of the faithful, until a few days before his death, when that sacred rite was administered to him at Nicomedia, by Eusebius, bishop of that place.^w But neither of these circumstances are

Of Constantine's sincerity in the profession of Christianity.

t Euseb. *De vita Constant.* lib. ii. cap. xx. p. 453, cap. xlv. p. 464.

u See Godofred. *ad codic. Theodosian.* tom. vi. part i. p. 290.

w Eusebius *De vita Constantini*, lib. iv. cap. lxi. lxii. Those who, upon the authority of certain records, whose date is modern, and whose credit is extremely dubious, affirm, that Constantine was baptized in the year 324 at Rome, by Sylvester, the bishop of that city, are evidently mistaken. Those, even of the Romish church, who are the most eminent for their learning and sagacity, reject this notion. See Noris, *Hist. Donatist.* tom. iv. opp. p. 65. Thom. Mariæ Mamachii *Origin. et Antiquit. Christian.* tom. ii. p. 232.

sufficient to prove, that he was not entirely persuaded of the divinity of the Christian religion, or that his profession of the gospel was an act of pure dissimulation. For it was a custom with many, in this century, to put off their baptism to the last hour, that thus immediately after receiving by this rite the remission of their sins, they might ascend pure and spotless to the mansions of life and immortality. Nor are the crimes of Constantine any proof of the insincerity of his profession, since nothing is more evident, though it be strange and unaccountable, than that many who believe, in the firmest manner, the truth and divinity of the gospel, yet violate its laws by repeated transgressions, and live in contradiction to their own inward principles. Another question of a different nature might be proposed here, viz. Whether motives of a worldly kind did not contribute, in a certain measure, to give Christianity, in the esteem of Constantine, a preference to all other religious systems? It is indeed probable, that this prince perceived the admirable tendency of the Christian doctrine and precepts, to promote the stability of government, by preserving the citizens in their obedience to the reigning powers, and in the practice of those virtues that render a state happy. And he must naturally have observed, how defective the Roman superstition was in this important point.^x

ix. The doubts and difficulties that naturally arise in the mind, concerning the *miraculous cross* that Constantine solemnly declared he had seen about noon in the air, are many and considerable. It is easy, indeed, to refute the opinion of those, who look upon this prodigy as a cunning fiction, invented by the emperor to animate his troops in the ensuing battle, or who consider the narration as wholly fabulous.^y The sentiment

A cross seen
by him in the
air.

^x See Eusebius, *De vita Constant.* lib. i. cap. xxvii. p. 421. It has been sometimes remarked, by the more eminent writers of the Roman history, that the superstition of that people, contrary to what Dr. Mosheim here observes, had a great influence in keeping them in their subordination and allegiance. It is more particularly observed, that in no other nation the solemn obligation of an oath was treated with such respect, and fulfilled with such a religious circumspection, and such an inviolable fidelity. But, notwithstanding all this, it is certain, that superstition, if it may be dexterously turned to good purposes, may be equally employed to bad. The artifice of an augur could have rendered superstition as useful to the inferior designs of a Tarquin and a Catiline, as to the noble and virtuous purposes of a Publicola or a Trajan. But true Christianity can animate or encourage to nothing that is not just and good. It tends to support government by the principles of piety and justice, and not by the ambiguous flight of birds, and such like delusions.

^y Hornbeck. *Comment. ad Bullam Urban.* viii. de *Imagin. cultu*, p. 128. Oiselius.

also of those, who imagine that this pretended cross was no more than a natural phenomenon in a solar halo, is, perhaps, more ingenious, than solid and convincing.² Nor, in the third place, do we think it sufficiently proved, that the divine power interposed here to confirm the wavering faith of Constantine by a stupendous miracle. The only hypothesis, then,³ which remains, is, that we consider this famous cross as a vision represented to the emperor in a dream, with the remarkable inscription, *hac vince*, i. e. *in this conquer*; and this latter opinion is maintained by authors of considerable weight.^{aa}

x. The joy, with which the Christians were elated on account of the favourable edicts of Constantine and Licinius, was soon interrupted by the war which broke out between these two princes. Licinius being defeated in a pitched battle, in the year 314, made a

The Christians persecuted by Licinius.

Thesaur. Numism. Antiq. p. 463. Tollius, *Preface to the French Translation of Longinus*, as also his *Adnot. ad Lactantium De Mort. Persequut.* cap. xlv. Christ. Thomasius, *Observat. Hallens.* tom. i. p. 380.

x Jo. And. Schmidius, *Dis. de luna in cruce visa*. Jo. Alb. Fabricius, *Dis. de cruce a Constantino visa*, in his *Biblioth. Græca*, vol. vi. cap. i. p. 8, &c.

¶ a This hypothesis of Dr. Mosheim is not more credible than the real appearance of a cross in the air. Both events are recorded by the same authority. And, if the veracity of Constantine, or of Eusebius, are questioned with respect to the appearance of a cross in the day, they can scarcely be confided in with respect to the truth of the nocturnal vision. It is very surprising to see the learned authors of the *Universal History* adopt, without exception, all the accounts of Eusebius concerning the cross, which are extremely liable to suspicion, which Eusebius himself seems to have believed but in part, and for the truth of all which he is careful not to make himself answerable. See that author *De vita Constant.* lib. ii. cap. ix.

This whole story is attended with difficulties, which render it, both as a miracle and as a fact, extremely dubious, to say no more. It will necessarily be asked, whence it comes to pass, that the relation of a fact which is said to have been seen by a whole army, is delivered by Eusebius, upon the whole credit of Constantine? This is the more unaccountable, that Eusebius lived and conversed with many that must have been spectators of this event, had it really happened, and whose unanimous testimony would have prevented the necessity of Constantine's confirming it to him by an oath. The sole relation of one man, concerning a public appearance, is not sufficient to give complete conviction; nor does it appear, that this story was generally believed by the Christians, or by others, since several ecclesiastical historians, who wrote after Eusebius, particularly Ruffin and Sozomen, make no mention of this appearance of a cross in the heavens. The nocturnal vision was, it must be confessed, more generally known and believed. Upon which Dr. Lardner makes this conjecture, that when Constantine first informed the people of the reason that induced him to make use of the sign of the cross in his army, he alleged nothing but a dream for that purpose; but that in the latter part of his life, when he was acquainted with Eusebius, he added the other particular, of a *luminous cross*, seen *somewhere* by him and his army in the daytime, for the place is not mentioned; and that the emperor having related this in a most solemn manner, Eusebius thought himself obliged to mention it.

aa All the writers, who have given any account of Constantine the Great, are carefully enumerated by J. A. Fabricius, in his *Lux. Salut. Evang. toti orbi evox.* cap. xii. p. 260, who also mentions, cap. xiii. p. 237, the laws concerning religious matters, which were enacted by this emperor, and digested into four parts. For a full account of these laws, see Jac. Godofred. *Adnotat. ad Codic. Theodos.* and Balduinus, in his *Constan. Magn. seu de legibus Constantini Eccles. et Civilibus*, lib. ii. of which a second edition was published, at Halle, by Gundling, in 8vo. in the year 1727.

treaty of peace with Constantine, and observed it during the space of nine years. But his turbulent spirit rendered him an enemy to repose ; and his natural violence seconded, and still further incensed, by the suggestions of the heathen priests, armed him against Constantine, in the year 324, for the second time. During this war, he endeavoured to engage in his cause all those who remained attached to the ancient superstition, that thus he might oppress his adversary with numbers ; and, in order to this, he persecuted the Christians in a cruel manner, and put to death many of their bishops, after trying them with torments of the most barbarous nature.^b But all his enterprises proved abortive ; for, after several battles fought without success, he was reduced to the necessity of throwing himself at the victor's feet, and imploring his clemency ; which, however, he did not long enjoy ; for he was strangled by the orders of Constantine, in the year 325. After the defeat of Licinius, the empire was ruled by Constantine alone until his death, and the Christian cause experienced, in its happy progress, the effects of his auspicious administration. This zealous prince employed all the resources of his genius, all the authority of his laws, and all the engaging charms of his munificence and liberality, to efface, by degrees, the superstitions of paganism, and to propagate Christianity in every corner of the Roman empire. He had learned, no doubt, from the disturbances continually excited by Licinius, that neither himself nor the empire could enjoy a fixed state of tranquillity and safety as long as the ancient superstitions subsisted ; and therefore, from this period, he openly opposed the sacred rites of paganism, as a religion detrimental to the interests of the state.

xi. After the death of Constantine, which happened in the year 337, his three sons, Constantine the II. Constantius, and Constans, were, in consequence of his appointment, put in possession of the empire, and were all saluted as emperors and Augusti by the Roman senate. There were yet living two bro-

The state of the church under the sons of Constantine the Great.

^b Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.* lib. x. cap. viii. Id. *De vita Constantini*, lib. i. cap. xlix. Julian himself, whose bitter aversion to Constantine gives a singular degree of credibility to his testimony in this matter, could not help confessing that Licinius was an infamous tyrant, and a profligate, abandoned to all sorts of wickedness. See the *Cæsars* of Julian, p. 222, of the French edition, by Spanheim. And here I beg leave to make a remark, which has escaped the learned, and that is, that Aurelius Victor, in his book *de Cæsaribus*, cap. xli. p. 435, edit. Arntzenii, has mentioned the persecution under Licinius in the following terms : " Licinio ne insontium quidem ac nobilium philosopho-

thers of the late emperor, viz. Constantius Dalmatius and Julius Constantius, and they had several sons. These the sons of Constantine ordered to be put to death, lest their ambitious views should excite troubles in the empire; and they all fell victims to this barbarous order, except Gallus and Julian, the sons of Julius Constantius, the latter of whom rose afterward to the imperial dignity. The dominions allotted to Constantine were Britain, Gaul, and Spain; but he did not possess them long, for having made himself master, by force, of several places belonging to Constans, this occasioned a war between the two brothers, in the year 340, in which Constantine lost his life. Constans, who had received, at first, for his portion, Illyricum, Italy, and Africa, added now the dominions of the deceased prince to his own, and thus became sole master of all the western provinces. He remained in possession of this vast territory until the year 350, when he was cruelly assassinated by the orders of Magnentius, one of his commanders, who had revolted and declared himself emperor. Magnentius, in his turn, met with the fate he deserved; transported with rage and despair at his ill success in the war against Constantius, and apprehending the most terrible and ignominious death from the just resentment of the conqueror, he laid violent hands upon himself. Thus Constantius, who had, before this, possessed the provinces of Asia, Syria, and Egypt, became, in the year 353, sole lord of the Roman empire, which he ruled until the year 361, when he died at Mopsucrene, on the borders of Cilicia, as he was marching against Julian. None of these three brothers possessed the spirit and genius of their father. They all, indeed, followed his example, in continuing to abrogate and efface the ancient superstitions of the Romans and other idolatrous nations, and to accelerate the progress of the Christian religion throughout the empire. This zeal

rum servili more cruciatus adhibiti modum fecere." The philosophers, whom Licinius is here said to have tormented, were, doubtless, the Christians, whom many, through ignorance, looked upon as a philosophical sect. This passage of Aurelius has not been touched by the commentators, who are too generally more intent upon the knowledge of words, than of things.

It is more probable, that the principal design of this massacre was to recover the Provinces of Thrace, Macedon, and Achaia, which, in the division of the empire, Constantine the Great had given to young Dalmatius, son to his brother of the same name, and Pontus and Cappadocia, which he had granted to Annibalianus, the brother of young Dalmatius. Be that as it will, Dr. Mosheim has attributed this massacre equally to the three sons of Constantine; whereas almost all authors agree that neither young Constantine, nor Constans, had any hand in it at all.

was, no doubt, laudable ; its end was excellent ; but, in the means used to accomplish it, there were many things worthy of blame.

XII. This flourishing progress of the Christian religion was greatly interrupted, and the church reduced to the brink of destruction, when Julian, the son of Julius Constantius, and the only remaining branch of the imperial family, was placed at the head of affairs. This active and adventurous prince, after having been declared emperor by the army in the year 380, in consequence of his exploits among the Gauls, was, upon the death of Constantius, the year following, confirmed in the undivided possession of the empire. No event could be less favourable to the Christians. For though he had been educated in the principles of Christianity, yet he apostatized from that divine religion, and employed all his efforts to restore the expiring superstitions of polytheism to their former vigour, credit, and lustre. This apostacy of Julian, from the gospel of Christ to the worship of the gods, was owing, partly, to his aversion to the Constantine family, who had imbrued their hands in the blood of his father, brother, and kinsmen ; and partly to the artifices of the Platonic philosophers, who abused his credulity, and flattered his ambition, by fictitious miracles and pompous predictions. It is true, this prince seemed averse to the use of violence, in propagating superstition, and suppressing the truth ; nay, he carried the appearances of moderation and impartiality so far, as to allow his subjects a full power of judging for themselves in religious matters, and of worshipping the Deity in the manner they thought the most rational. But, under this mask of moderation, he attacked Christianity with the utmost bitterness, and, at the same time, with the most consummate dexterity. By art and stratagem he undermined the church, removing the privileges that were granted to Christians and their spiritual rulers ; shutting up the schools in which they taught philosophy and the liberal arts ; encouraging the sectaries and schismatics, who brought dishonour upon the gospel by their divisions ; composing books against the Christians, and using a variety of other means to bring the religion of Jesus to ruin and contempt. Julian extended his views yet further, and was meditating projects of a still more formidable nature against the Christian church, which would

Julian attempts the destruction of Christianity.

have felt, no doubt, the fatal and ruinous effects of his inveterate hatred, if he had returned victorious from the Persian war, which he entered into immediately after his accession to the empire. But in this war, which was rashly undertaken and imprudently conducted, he fell by the lance of a Persian soldier, and expired in his tent, in the 32d year of his age, having reigned alone, after the death of Constantius, twenty months."

XIII. It is to me just matter of surprise to find Julian placed, by many learned and judicious writers,^e among the greatest heroes that shine forth in the annals of time ; nay, exalted above all the princes and legislators that have been distinguished by the wisdom of their government. Such writers must either be too far blinded by prejudice, to perceive the truth ; or, they must never have perused, with any degree of attention, those works of Julian that are still extant ; or, if neither of these be their case, they must, at least, be ignorant of that which constitutes true greatness. The real character of Julian has few lines of that uncommon merit that has been attributed to it ; for, if we set aside his genius, of which his works give no very high idea ; if we except, moreover, his military courage, his love of letters, and his acquaintance with that vain and fanatical philosophy, which was known by the name of modern Platonism, we shall find nothing remaining that is, in any measure, worthy of praise, or productive of esteem. Besides, the qualities now mentioned were, in him, counterbalanced by the most opprobrious defects. He was a slave to superstition, than which nothing is a more evident mark of a narrow soul, of a mean and abject spirit. His thirst of glory and popular applause were excessive even to puerility ; his credulity and levity surpass the powers of description ; a low cunning, and a profound dissimulation and duplicity, had acquired, in his mind, the force of predominant habits ; and all this was accompanied with a total and perfect ignorance of true

His charac'er.

^d For a full account of this emperor, it will be proper to consult, beside Tillemont and other common writers, *La vie de Julien, par l'Abbe Bletterie*, which is a most accurate and elegant production. See also *The Life and Character of Julian*, illustrated in seven dissertations, by Des Voeux, Ezech. Spanhem. *Præfat. et adnot. ad opp. Juliani* ; and Fabricii, *Lux Evangel. toti orbi exorientis*, cap. xiv. p. 294.

^e Montesquieu, in chap. x. of the xxivth book of his work, entitled, *L'Esprit des loix*, speaks of Julian in the following terms : " Il n'y a point eu apres lui de Prince plus digne de gouverner des hommes."

philosophy.^f So that, though, in some things, Julian may be allowed to have excelled the sons of Constantine the Great, yet it must be granted, on the other hand, that he was, in many respects, inferior to Constantine himself, whom, upon all occasions, he loads with the most licentious invectives, and treats with the utmost disdain.

XIV. As Julian affected, in general, to appear moderate in religious matters, unwilling to trouble any on account of their faith, or to seem averse to any sect or party, so to the Jews, in particular, he extended so far the marks of his indulgence, as to permit them to rebuild the temple of Jerusalem. The Jews set about this important work ; from which, however, they were obliged to desist, before they had even begun to lay the foundations of the sacred edifice. For, while they were removing the rubbish, formidable balls of fire, issuing out of the ground with a dreadful noise, dispersed both the works and the workmen, and repeated earthquakes filled the spectators of this astonishing phenomenon with terror and dismay. This signal event is attested in a manner that renders its evidence irresistible,^g though, as usually happens in cases of that nature, the Christians have embellished it by augmenting rashly the number of the miracles that are supposed to have been wrought upon that occasion. The causes of this phenomenon may furnish matter of dispute ; and learned men have, in effect, been divided upon that point. All, however, who consider the matter with attention and impartiality, will perceive the strongest reasons for embracing the opinion of those who attribute this event to the almighty interposition of the Supreme Being ; nor do the arguments offered, by some, to prove it the effect of natural causes, or those alleged by others to persuade us that it was the result of artifice and imposture, contain any thing that may not be refuted with the utmost facility."

^f If Nothing can afford a more evident proof of Julian's ignorance of the true philosophy, than his known attachment to the study of magic, which Dr. Mosheim has omitted in his enumeration of the defects and extravagances of this prince.

^g See Jo. Alb. Fabricii *Lux Evang. toti orbi exoriens*, p. 124, where all the testimonies of this remarkable event are carefully assembled ; see also Moyle's *Posthumous Works*, p. 101, &c.

h The truth of this miracle is denied by the famous Basnage, *Histoire des Juifs*, tom. iv. p. 1257, against whom Cuper has taken the affirmative, and defended it in his *Letters* published by Bayer, p. 400. A most ingenious discourse has been published lately in defence of this miracle, by the learned Dr. Warburton, under the title of *Julian ; or A discourse concerning the earthquake and fiery eruption*. &c. in which the objections of Basnage are particularly examined and refuted.

The Jews attempt in vain to rebuild the temple of Jerusalem.

xv. Upon the death of Julian, the suffrages of the army were united in favour of Jovian, who, accordingly, succeeded him in the imperial dignity. After a reign of seven months, Jovian died in the year 364, and therefore had not time to execute any thing of importance.ⁱ The emperors who succeeded him, in this century, were Valentinian I. Valens, Gratian, Valentinian II. and Honorius, who professed Christianity, promoted its progress, and endeavoured, though not all with equal zeal, to root out entirely the Gentile superstitions. In this they were all surpassed by the last of the emperors who reigned in this century, viz. Theodosius the Great, who came to the empire in the year 379, and died in the year 395. As long as this prince lived, he exerted himself, in the most vigorous and effectual manner, in the extirpation of the pagan superstitions throughout all the provinces, and enacted severe laws and penalties against such as adhered to them. His sons Arcadius and Honorius pursued with zeal, and not without success, the same end; so that toward the conclusion of this century, the Gentile religions declined apace, and had also no prospect left of recovering their primitive authority and splendour.

xvi. It is true, that, notwithstanding all this zeal and severity of the Christian emperors, there still remained in several places, and especially in the remoter provinces, temples and religious rites consecrated to the service of the pagan deities. And indeed, when we look attentively into the matter, we shall find, that the execution of those rigorous laws, that were enacted against the worshippers of the gods, was rather levelled at the multitude, than at persons of eminence and distinction. For it appears, that, both during the reign, and after the death of Theodosius, many of the most honourable and important posts were filled by persons, whose aversion to Christianity, and whose attachment to paganism, were sufficiently known. The example of Libanius alone is an evident proof of this; since, notwithstanding his avowed and open enmity to the Christians, he was raised by Theodosius himself to the high dignity of prefect, or chief of the Pretorian guards. It is extremely probable, therefore, that in the ex-

The state of the church after the death of Julian.

Remains of paganism.

ⁱ See Bletterie, *Vie de Jovien*, vol. ii. published at Paris in 1748, in which the *Life of Julian*, by the same author, is further illustrated, and some productions of that emperor translated into French

cution of the severe laws enacted against the pagans, there was an exception made in favour of philosophers, rhetoricians, and military leaders, on account of the important services which they were supposed to render to the state, and that they of consequence enjoyed more liberty in religious matters, than the inferior orders of men.

XVII. This peculiar regard shown to the philosophers and rhetoricians will, no doubt, appear surprising when it is considered, that all the force of their genius, and all the resources of their art were employed against Christianity; and that those very sages, whose schools were reputed of such utility to the state, were the very persons who opposed the progress of the truth with the greatest vehemence and contention of mind. Hierocles, the great ornament of the Platonic school, wrote, in the beginning of this century, two books against the Christians, in which he went so far as to draw a parallel between Jesus Christ and Apollonius Tyanæus. This presumption was chastised with great spirit by Eusebius, in a particular treatise written expressly in answer to Hierocles. Lactantius takes notice of another philosopher, who composed three books to detect the pretended errors of the Christians,^k but does not mention his name. After the time of Constantine the Great, beside the long and laborious work which Julian wrote against the followers of Christ, Himerius^l and Libanius, in their public harangues, and Eunapius, in his lives of the philosophers, exhausted all their rage and bitterness in their efforts to defame the Christian religion; while the calumnies, that abounded in the discourses of the one, and the writings of the other, passed unpunished.

XVIII. The prejudice which the Christian cause received, in this century, from the stratagems of these philosophers and rhetoricians, who were elated with a presumptuous notion of their knowledge, and prepossessed with a bitter aversion to the gospel, was certainly very considerable. Many examples concur to prove this; and particularly that of Julian, who was seduced by the artifices of these corrupt sophists. The effects of their disputes and declamations were not, indeed, the same upon all; some, who assumed the appearance of su-

The efforts
of the philoso-
phers against
Christianity.

The preju-
dice which
the Christian
cause receiv-
ed from the
philosophers.

^k *Institut. Divin. lib. v. cap. ii. p. 535.*

^l See Photius *Biblioth. Cod. Cap. lxx. p. 355.*

perior wisdom, and who, either from moderation or indifference, professed to pursue a middle way in these religious controversies, composed matters in the following manner; they gave so far their ear to the interpretations and discourses of the rhetoricians, as to form to themselves a middle kind of religion, between the ancient theology and the new doctrine that was now propagated in the empire; and they persuaded themselves, that the same truths which Christ taught, had been for a long time concealed, by the priests of the gods, under the veil of ceremonies, fables, and allegorical representations.^m Of this number were Ammianus Marcellinus, a man of singular merit; Themistius, an orator highly distinguished by his uncommon eloquence and the eminence of his station; Chalcidius, a philosopher, and others, who were all of opinion, that the two religions, when properly interpreted and understood, agreed perfectly well in the main points; and that therefore, neither the religion of Christ, nor that of the gods, were to be treated with contempt.

xix. The zeal and diligence with which Constantine and his successors exerted themselves in the cause of Christianity, and in extending the limits of the church, prevent our surprise at the number of barbarous and uncivilized nations, which received the gospel.^{Progress of Christianity.} It appears highly probable, from many circumstances, that both the Greater and the Lesser Armenia were enlightened with the knowledge of the truth, not long after the first

¶ In This notion, absurd as it is, has been revived, in the most extravagant manner, in a work published at Harderwyk in Guelderland, in the year 1757, by Mr. Struchtmeyer, professor of eloquence and languages in that university. In this work, which bears the title of the *Symbolical Hercules*, the learned and wrong-headed author maintains, as he had also done in a preceding work, entitled, *An Explication of the Pagan Theology*, that all the doctrines of Christianity were emblematically represented in the heathen mythology; and not only so, but that the inventors of that mythology knew that the Son of God was to descend upon earth; believed in Christ as the only fountain of salvation; were persuaded of his future incarnation, death, and resurrection; and had acquired all this knowledge and faith by the perusal of a Bible much older than either Moses or Abraham, &c. The pagan doctors, thus instructed, according to Mr. Struchtmeyer, in the mysteries of Christianity, taught these truths under the veil of emblems, types, and figures. Jupiter, represented the true God; Juno, who was obstinate and ungovernable, was the emblem of the ancient Israel; the chaste Diana, was a type of the Christian church; Hercules was the figure, or forerunner of Christ; Amphitryon, was Joseph; the two serpents, that Hercules killed in his cradle, were the Pharisees and Sadducees, &c. Such are the principal lines of Mr. Struchtmeyer's system, which shows the sad havoc that a warm imagination, undirected by a just and solid judgment, makes in religion. It is, however, honourable perhaps to the present age, that a system, from which Ammianus Marcellinus and other philosophers of old derived applause, will be generally looked upon, at present, as entitling its restorer to a place in Bedlam.

n Gaudentii *vita Philastrii*, § 3. Philastrius, *De hæres. Præf.* p. 5, edit. Fabricii Socrates, *Hist. Eccles.* lib. i. cap. xix. Georgius Cedrenus, *Chronograph.* p. 234, edit. Paris.

rise of Christianity. The Armenian church was not, however, completely formed and established before this century ; in the commencement of which Gregory, the son of Anax, who is commonly called the *enlightener*, from his having dispelled the darkness of the Armenian superstitions, converted to Christianity Tiridates, king of Armenia, and all the nobles of his court. In consequence of this, Gregory was consecrated bishop of the Armenians, by Leontius bishop of Cappadocia, and his ministry was crowned with such success, that the whole province was soon converted to the Christian faith.^o

xx. Toward the middle of this century, a certain person, named Frumentius, came from Egypt to Abassia,
Among the Abassines or Ethiopians. or Ethiopia, whose inhabitants derived the name of Axumitæ from Axuma, the capital city of that country. He made known among this people the gospel of Christ, and administered the sacrament of baptism to their king, and to several persons of the first distinction at his court. As Frumentius was returning from hence into Egypt, he received consecration as the first bishop of the Axumitæ, or Ethiopians, from Athanasius. And this is the reason why the Ethiopian church has, even to our times, been considered as the daughter of the Alexandrian, from which it also receives its bishop.^p

The light of the gospel was introduced into Iberia, a
And Georgians. province of Asia, now called Georgia, in the following manner ; a certain woman was carried into that country as a captive, during the reign of Constantine the Great, and by the grandeur of her miracles, and the remarkable sanctity of her life and manners, she made such an impression upon the king and queen, that they abandoned their false gods, embraced the faith of the gospel, and sent to Constantinople for proper persons to give them and their people a more satisfactory and complete knowledge of the Christian religion.^q

^o *Narratio de rebus Armeniæ in Franc Comedessii Auctario Biblioth. Patrum Græcor.* tom. ii. p. 287. Mich. Lequien, *Oriens Christianus*, tom. i. p. 419, 1356. Jo. Joach. Schroderi *Thesaur. linguæ Armeniæ*, p. 149.

^p Athanasius, *Apolog. ad Constantium*, tom. i. opp. part ii. p. 315, edit. Benedict. Sozomen. *Hist. Eccles.* book i. ch. xix. of the former, book ii. ch. xxiv. of the latter. Theodoret. *Hist. Eccles.* lib. i. cap. xxiii. p. 54. Ludolf. *Comment. ad Hist. Æthiopic.* p. 281. Hier. Lobo, *Voyage d'Abyssinie*, tom. ii. p. 13. Justus Fontanus, *Hist. Litter. Aquileiæ*, p. 174.

^q Rufinus, *Hist. Eccles.* lib. i. cap. x. Sozomen, *Hist. Eccles.* lib. ii. cap. v. Lequien, *Oriens Chris.* tom. i. p. 1333.

XXI. A considerable part of the Goths, who had inhabited Thrace, Mœsia, and Dacia, had received the knowledge and embraced the doctrines of Christianity before this century; and Theophilus, their bishop, was present at the council of Nice. ^{And Goths.} Constantine the Great, after having vanquished them and the Sarmatians, engaged great numbers of them to become Christians. But still a large body continued in their attachment to their ancient superstition, until the time of the emperor Valens. This prince permitted them indeed, to pass the Danube, and to inhabit Dacia, Mœsia, and Thrace; but it was on condition, that they should live in subjection to the Roman laws, and embrace the profession of Christianity, which condition was accepted by their king Fritigern. The celebrated Ulphilus, bishop of those Goths, who dwelt in Mœsia, lived in this century, and distinguished himself much by his genius and piety. Among other eminent services which he rendered to his country, he invented a set of letters for their peculiar use, and translated the Scriptures into the Gothic language.

XXII. There remained still, in the European provinces, an incredible number of persons who adhered to the worship of the gods; and though the Christian ^{Among the Gauls} bishops continued their pious efforts to gain them over to the gospel, yet the success was, by no means, proportionable to their diligence and zeal, and the work of conversion went on but slowly. In Gaul, the great and venerable Martin, bishop of Tours, set about this important work with tolerable success. For, in his various voyages among the Gauls, he converted many, every where, by the energy of his discourses, and by the power of his miracles, if we may rely upon the testimony of Sulpitius Severus in this matter. He destroyed also the temples of the gods, pulled down their statues," and on all these accounts merited the high and honourable title of Apostle of the Gauls.

r Socrat. *Hist. Eccles.* lib. i. cap. xviii.

s Socrat. *Hist. Eccles.* lib. iv. cap. xxxiii. Lequien, *Oriens Chris.* tom. i. p. 1240. Eric. Benzelius, *Præf. ad Quatuor Evangelia Gothica, quæ Ulphilæ tribuntur*, cap. v. p. xviii. published at Oxford, in the year 1750, in 4to.

t Jo. Jac. Mascovii *Historia Germanorum*, tom. i. p. 317, tom. ii. not. p. 49. *Acta SS. Martii*, tom. iii. p. 619. Benzelius, *loc. citat.* cap. viii. p. xxx.

u See Sulpit. Severus, *Dial.* i. *De Vita Martini*, cap. xiii. p. 20, cap. xv. p. 22, cap. xvii. p. 23. *Dial.* ii. p. 106, edit. Hier. a Prato, Verona, 1741.

XXIII. There is no doubt, but that the victories of Constantine the Great, the fear of punishment, and the desire of pleasing this mighty conqueror, and his imperial successors, were the weighty arguments that moved whole nations, as well as particular persons, to embrace Christianity. None, however, that have any acquaintance with the transactions of this period of time, will attribute the whole progress of Christianity to these causes. For it is undeniably manifest, that the indefatigable zeal of the bishops, and other pious men, the innocence and sanctity which shone forth with such lustre in the lives of many Christians, the translations that were published of the sacred writings, and the intrinsic beauty and excellence of the Christian religion, made as strong and deep impressions upon some, as worldly views and selfish considerations did upon others.

As to the miracles attributed to Antony, Paul the hermit, and Martin, I give them up without the least difficulty, and join with those who treat these pretended prodigies with the contempt they deserve.* I am also willing to grant, that many events have been rashly esteemed miraculous, which were the result of the ordinary laws of nature; and also that several pious frauds have been imprudently made use of, to give new degrees of weight and dignity to the Christian cause. But I cannot, on the other hand, assent to the opinions of those who maintain, that, in this century, miracles had entirely ceased; and that at this period, the Christian church was not favoured with any extraordinary or supernatural mark of a divine power engaged in its cause.

XXIV. The Christians who lived under the Roman government was not afflicted with any severe calamities from the time of Constantine the Great, except those which they suffered during the troubles and commotions raised by Licinius, and under the transitory reign of Julian. Their tranquillity however was, at different times, disturbed in several places. Among others, Athanaric, king of the Goths, persecuted, for some time, with bitter-

* Hier. a Prato, in his preface to Sulpitius Severus, p. 13, disputes warmly in favour of the miracles of Martin, and also of the other prodigies of this century.

x See Eusebius's book against Hierocles, ch. iv. p. 431, edit. Olearii; as also Henr. Dodwell, *Diss. ii. in Irenæum*, § 55, p. 195. See Dr. Middleton's *Free Inquiry into the Miraculous Powers, which are said to have subsisted in the Christian Church*, &c. in which a very different opinion is maintained. See, however, on the other side, the up-views of Church and Dodwell to Middleton's *Inquiry*.

ness, that part of the Gothic nation which had embraced Christianity.^y In the remoter provinces, the pagans often defended their ancient superstitions by the force of arms, and massacred the Christians, who, in the propagation of their religion, were not always sufficiently attentive, either to the rules of prudence, or the dictates of humanity.^z The Christians who lived beyond the limits of the Roman empire, had a harder fate. Sapor II. king of Persia, vented his rage against those of his dominions in three dreadful persecutions. The first of these happened in the 18th year of the reign of that prince; the second, in the 30th, and the third, in the 31st year of the same reign. This last was the most cruel and destructive of the three; it carried off an incredible number of Christians, and continued during the space of forty years, having commenced in the year 330, and ceased only in 370. It was not, however, the religion of the Christians, but the ill grounded suspicion of their treasonable designs against the state, that drew upon them this terrible calamity. For the magi and the Jews persuaded the Persian monarch, that all the Christians were devoted to the interests of the Roman emperor, and that Symeon, archbishop of Seleucia and Ctesiphon, sent to Constantinople intelligence of all that passed in Persia.^a

y See Theodor. Ruinarti *Acta marty. sincera*, and there *Acta S. Sabæ*, p. 598.

z See Ambrosius, *De Officiis*, lib. i. cap. xlii. § 17.

a See Sozomen. *Hist. Eccles.* lib. ii. cap. i. xlii. There is a particular and express account of this persecution in the *Bibliothec. Oriental. Clement. Vatican.* tom. i. p. 6, 16, 181, tom. iii. p. 52, with which it will be proper to compare the preface of the learned Asseman, to his *Acta martyrum oriental. et occidental.* published in two volumes, in folio, at Rome, in the year 1748; as this author has published the *Persian Martyrology*, in Syriac, with a Latin translation, and enriched this valuable work with many excellent observations.

PART II.

INTERNAL HISTORY OF THE CHURCH.

CHAPTER I.

WHICH CONTAINS THE HISTORY OF LEARNING AND PHILOSOPHY.

I. **PHILOLOGY**, eloquence, poetry, and history, were the branches of science particularly cultivated at this time, by those, among the Greeks and Latins, who were desirous to make a figure in the learned world. But though several persons of both nations acquired a certain degree of reputation by their literary pursuits, yet they came all far short of the summit of fame. The best poets of this period, such as Ausonius, appear insipid, harsh, and inelegant, when compared with the sublime bards of the Augustan age. The rhetoricians, departing now from the noble simplicity and majesty of the ancients, instructed the youth in the fallacious art of pompous declamation; and the greatest part of the historical writers were more set upon embellishing their narrations with vain and tawdry ornaments, than upon rendering them interesting by their order, perspicuity, and truth.

II. Almost all the philosophers of this age were of that sect which we have already distinguished by the title of modern platonics. It is not therefore surprising, that we find the principles of platonism in all the writings of the Christians. The number, however, of these philosophers was not so considerable in the west as in the eastern countries. Jamblichus of Chalcis explained, in Syria, the philosophy of Plato, or rather propagated his own particular opinions under that respectable name. He was an obscure and credulous man, and his turn of mind was highly superstitious and chimerical, as his writings abundantly testify." His successors were,

The state of learning.
The progress of the platonic philosophy.
[F] b Dr. Mosheim speaks here of only one Jamblichus, though there were three persons who bore that name. It is not easy to determine which of them was the author of those works that have reached our times under the name of Jamblichus; but whoever it was, he does not certainly deserve so mean a character as our learned historian here gives him.

Ædesius, Maximus, and others, whose follies and puerilities are exposed, at length, by Eunapius. Hypatia, a female philosopher of distinguished merit and learning, Isidorus, Olympiodorus, Synesius, afterward a semi-christian, with others of inferior reputation, were the principal persons concerned in propagating this new modification of platonism.

III. As the emperor Julian was passionately attached to this sect, which his writings abundantly prove, he employed every method to increase its authority Its fate. and lustre, and for that purpose, engaged in its cause several men of learning and genius, who vied with each other in exalting its merit and excellence.^c But after his death, a dreadful storm of persecution arose, under the reign of Valentinian, against the platonists; many of whom, being accused of magical practices, and other heinous crimes, were capitally convicted. During these commotions, Maximus, the master and favourite of Julian, by whose persuasions this emperor had been engaged to renounce Christianity, and to apply himself to the study of magic, was put to death with several others.^d It is probable indeed, that the friendship and intimacy that had subsisted between the apostate emperor and these pretended sages were greater crimes, in the eye of Valentinian, than either their philosophical system or their magic arts. And hence it happened, that such of the sect as lived at a distance from the court, were not involved in the dangers or calamities of this persecution.

IV. From the time of Constantine the Great, the Christians applied themselves with more zeal and diligence to the study of philosophy and of the liberal arts, than they had formerly done. The state of learning among the Christians. The emperors encouraged this taste for the sciences, and left no means unemployed to excite and maintain a spirit of literary emulation among the professors of Christianity. For this purpose, schools were established in many cities. Libraries were also erected, and men of learning and genius were nobly recompensed by the honours and advantages that

^c See the learned Baron Ezekiel Spanheim's *Preface to the works of Julian*; and that also which he has prefixed to his French translation of Julian's *Cæsars*, p. 111, and his annotations to the latter, p. 234; see also Bletterie, *Vie de l'Empereur Julien*, lib. i. p. 26.

^d Ammian. Marcellin. *Historiarum*, lib. xxix. cap. i. p. 556, edit. Valesii. Bletterie, *Vie de Julien*, p. 30—155, 159, and *Vie de Jovien*, tom. i. p. 194.

were attached to the culture of the sciences and arts.^e All this was indispensably necessary to the successful execution of the scheme that was laid for abrogating, by degrees, the worship of the gods. For the ancient religion was maintained, and its credit supported, by the erudition and talents which distinguished in so many places the sages of paganism. And there was just reason to apprehend that the truth might suffer, if the Christian youth, for want of proper masters and instructors of their own religion, should have recourse, for their education, to the schools of the pagan philosophers and rhetoricians.

v. From what has been here said concerning the state of learning among the Christians, we would not have any conclude, that an acquaintance with the sciences was become universal in the church of Christ. For as yet there was no law enacted, which excluded the ignorant and illiterate from ecclesiastical preferments and offices; and it is certain, that the greatest part, both of the bishops and presbyters, were men entirely destitute of all learning and education. Beside, that savage and illiterate party, who looked upon all sorts of erudition, particularly that of a philosophical kind, as pernicious and even destructive to true piety and religion, increased both in number and authority. The ascetics, monks, and hermits, augmented the strength of this barbarous faction; and not only the women, but also all who took solemn looks, sordid garments, and a love of solitude for real piety, and in this number we comprehend the generality of mankind, were vehemently prepossessed in their favour.

Many illiterate Christians.

CHAPTER II.

CONCERNING THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH, AND THE CHRISTIAN DOCTORS, DURING THIS CENTURY.

1. CONSTANTINE the Great made no essential alterations in the form of government that took place in the Christian church before his time; he only corrected it in some particulars, and gave it a greater extent.

The form of government in the Christian church.

^e See Godofred, *ad Codicis Theodos. titulos de professoribus et artibus liberalibus*. Franc. Balduinus in *Constantino M.* p. 122. Herm. Covingii *Dissert. de studiis Romæ et Constantinop.* at the end of his *Antiquitates Academicæ*.

For, though he permitted the church to remain a body politic distinct from that of the state, as it had formerly been, yet he assumed to himself the supreme power over this sacred body, and the right of modelling and governing it in such a manner, as should be most conducive to the public good. This right he enjoyed without any opposition, as none of the bishops presumed to call his authority in question. The people therefore continued, as usual, to choose freely their bishops and their teachers. The bishop governed the church, and managed the ecclesiastical affairs of the city or district, where he presided, in council with the presbyters, and with a due regard to the suffrages of the whole assembly of the people. The provincial bishops, assembled in council, deliberated together concerning those matters that related to the interests of the churches of a whole province, as also concerning religious controversies, the forms and rites of divine service, and other things of like moment. To these lesser councils which were composed of the ecclesiastical deputies, of one or more provinces, were afterward added *œcumenical councils*, consisting of commissioners from all the churches in the Christian world, and which, consequently, represented the church universal. These were established by the authority of the emperor, who assembled the first of these universal councils at Nice. This prince thought it equitable, that questions of superior importance, and such as intimately concerned the interests of Christianity in general, should be examined and decided in assemblies that represented the whole body of the Christian church; and in this it is highly probable, that his judgment was directed by that of the bishops. There were never, indeed, any councils held, which could, with strict propriety, be called *universal*; those, however, whose laws and decrees were approved and admitted by the universal church, or the greatest part of that sacred body, are commonly called *œcumenical* or *general* councils.

II. The rights and privileges of the several ecclesiastical orders were, however, gradually changed and diminished, from the time that the church began to be torn with divisions, and agitated with those violent dissensions and tumults, to which the elections of bishops, the diversity of religious opinions, and other things of a like nature, too frequently gave rise. In these religious quarrels, the weaker generally fled to the

Changes introduced with respect to the rights of the several orders of the church.

court for protection and succour; and thereby furnished the emperors with a favourable opportunity of setting limits to the power of the bishops, of infringing the liberties of the people, and of modifying, in various ways, the ancient customs according to their pleasure. And indeed, even the bishops themselves, whose opulence and authority were considerably increased since the reign of Constantine, began to introduce, gradually, innovations into the forms of ecclesiastical discipline, and to change the ancient government of the church. Their first step was an entire exclusion of the people from all part in the administration of ecclesiastical affairs; and afterward, they, by degrees, divested even the *presbyters* of their ancient privileges and their primitive authority, that they might have no importunate protestors to control their ambition, or oppose their proceedings; and principally, that they might either engross to themselves, or distribute as they thought proper, the possessions and revenues of the church. Hence it came to pass, that, at the conclusion of this century, there remained no more than a mere shadow of the ancient government of the church. Many of the privileges which had formerly belonged to the presbyters and people, were usurped by the bishops; and many of the rights, which had been formerly vested in the universal church, were transferred to the emperors, and to subordinate officers and magistrates.

III. Constantine the Great, in order to prevent civil commotions, and to fix his authority upon solid and stable foundations, made several changes, not only in the laws of the empire, but also in the form of the Roman government.^f And as there were many important reasons, which induced him to suit the administration of the church to these changes in the civil constitution, this necessarily introduced among the bishops new degrees of eminence and rank. Three prelates had, before this, enjoyed a certain degree of pre-eminence over the rest of the episcopal order, viz. the bishops of Rome, Antioch, and Alexandria; and to these the bishop of Constantinople was added, when the imperial residence was transferred to that city. These four prelates answered to the four *pretorian prefects* created by Constantine; and it is possible that, in this very century, they were distinguished by the Jewish title of patriarchs.

The ecclesiastical government modelled according to the civil.

Patriarchs.

^f See Bos. *Histoire de la monarchie Francoise*, tom. i. p. 64. Giannone, *Histoire de Naples*, tom. i. p. 94, 152.

After these followed the *exarchs*, who had the in-
 spection over several provinces, and answered to the ap-
 pointment of certain civil officers who bore the same title.
 In a lower class were the metropolitans, who had only the
 government of one province, under whom were
 the *archbishops*, whose inspection was confined to
 certain districts. In this gradation, the *bishops*
 brought up the rear; the sphere of their authority was not,
 in all places, equally extensive; being in some considerably
 ample, and in others confined within narrow limits. To
 these various ecclesiastical orders, we might add that of
 the *chorepiscopi*, or superintendents of the country
 churches; but this order was, in most places, suppressed
 by the bishops, with a design to extend their own authority,
 and enlarge the sphere of their power and jurisdiction.^g

Exarchs.

Archbishops.
Bishops.

iv. The administration of the church was divided, by
 Constantine himself, into an *external* and an *inter-
 nal* inspection.^h The latter, which was committed
 to bishops and councils, related to *religious con-
 troveries*; the *forms of divine worship*; the
officers of the priests; the *vices of the ecclesiastical or-
 ders*, &c. The *external* administration of the church the
 emperor assumed to himself. This comprehended all
 those things, that relate to the *outward state* and *dis-
 discipline* of the church; it likewise extended to all *con-
 tests* and *debates* that should arise between the ministers
 of the church, superior as well as inferior, concerning their
possessions, their *reputation*, their *rights* and *privileges*,
 their offences against the laws, and things of a like nature;
 but no controversies that related to matters purely reli-
 gious were cognizable by this *external* inspection. In con-
 sequence of this artful division of the ecclesiastical govern-
 ment, Constantine and his successors called councils, pre-
 sided in them, appointed the judges of religious controver-
 sies, terminated the differences which arose between the
 bishops and the people, fixed the limits of the ecclesiastical
 provinces, took cognizance of the civil causes that subsisted
 between the ministers of the church, and punished the
 crimes committed against the laws by the ordinary judges

The adminis-
tration of the
church divid-
ed into exter-
nal and inter-
nal.

^g This appears from several passages in the useful work of Lud. Thomassinus, entitled, *Disciplina Ecclesiæ vet. et novæ circa beneficia*, tom. i.

^h Euseb. *De vita Constantini*, lib. iv. cap. xxiv. p. 536.

ⁱ See the imperial laws both in Justinian's *Code*, and in the *Theodosian*; as also Godofred, *ad Codic. Theodos.* tom. vi. p. 55, 58, 333, &c.

appointed for that purpose ; giving over all causes purely ecclesiastical to the cognizance of bishops and councils. But this famous division of the administration of the church was never explained with perspicuity, nor determined with a sufficient degree of accuracy and precision ; so that both in this and the following centuries, we find many transactions that seem absolutely inconsistent with it. We find the emperors, for example, frequently determining matters purely ecclesiastical, and that belonged to the *internal* jurisdiction of the church ; and, on the other hand, nothing is more frequent than the decisions of bishops and councils concerning things that relate merely to the *external* form and government of the church.

v. In the episcopal order, the bishop of Rome was the first in rank, and was distinguished by a sort of pre-eminence over all other prelates. Prejudices arising from a great variety of causes, contributed to establish this superiority ; but it was chiefly owing to certain circumstances of grandeur and opulence, by which mortals, for the most part, from their ideas of pre-eminence and dignity, and which they generally confound with the reasons of a just and legal authority. The bishop of Rome surpassed all his brethren in the magnificence and splendour of the church over which he presided ; in the riches of his revenues and possessions ; in the number and variety of his ministers ; in his credit with the people ; and in his sumptuous and splendid manner of living. These dazzling marks of human power, these ambiguous proofs of true greatness and felicity, had such a mighty influence upon the minds of the multitude, that the see of Rome became, in this century, a most seducing object of sacerdotal ambition. Hence it happened, that when a new pontiff was to be elected by the suffrages of the presbyters and the people, the city of Rome was generally agitated with dissensions, tumults, and cabals, whose consequences were often deplorable and fatal. The intrigues and disturbances that prevailed in that city in the year 366, when upon the death of Liberius, another pontiff was to be chosen in his place, are a sufficient proof of what we have now advanced. Upon this occasion, one faction elected Damasus to that high dignity, while the opposite party

The rank and
dignity of the
bishop of
Rome.

k Ammianus Marcellinus gives a striking description of the luxury in which the bishops of Rome lived, *Hist. lib. xxvii. cap. iii. p. 337.*

chose Ursicinus, a deacon of the vacant church, to succeed Liberius. This double election gave rise to a dangerous schism, and to a sort of civil war within the city of Rome, which was carried on with the utmost barbarity and fury, and produced the most cruel massacres and desolations. This inhuman contest ended in the victory of Damasus; but whether his cause was more just than that of Ursicinus, is a question not so easy to determine.¹ Neither of the two indeed seem to have been possessed of such principles as constitute a good Christian, much less of that exemplary virtue that should distinguish a Christian bishop.

VI. Notwithstanding the pomp and splendour that surrounded the Roman see, it is however certain, The limits of his authority. that the bishops of that city had not acquired, in this century, that pre-eminence of power and jurisdiction in the church which they afterward enjoyed. In the ecclesiastical commonwealth, they were indeed the most eminent order of citizens; but still they were citizens as well as their brethren, and subject like them to the edicts and laws of the emperors. All religious causes of extraordinary importance were examined and determined, either by judges appointed by the emperors, or in councils assembled for that purpose, while those of inferior moment were decided in each district by its respective bishop. The ecclesiastical laws were enacted either by the emperor or by councils. None of the bishops acknowledged, that they derived their authority from the permission and appointment of the bishop of Rome, or that they were created bishops by the *favour of the apostolic see*. On the contrary, they all maintained, that they were the ambassadors and ministers of Jesus Christ, and that their authority was derived from above.^m It must however be observed, that even in this century, several of those steps were laid, by which the bishops of Rome mounted afterward to the summit of ecclesiastical power and despotism. These steps were partly laid by the imprudence of the emperors, partly by the dexterity of the Roman prelates themselves, and partly by the inconsiderate zeal and precipitate judgment

¹ Among the other writers of the papal history, see Bower's *History of the Popes*, vol. i. p. 180, 181, 182.

^m Those who desire an ampler account of this matter, may consult Petr. de Marca, *De concordia Sacerdotii et Imperii*. Du Pin, *De antiqua Ecclesiæ disciplina*; and the very learned and judicious work of Blondel, *De la Primauté dans l'Eglise*.

of certain bishops." The fourth *canon* of the council held at Sardis in the year 347, is considered, by the votaries of the Roman pontiff, as the principal step to his sovereignty in the church; but in my opinion it ought by no means to be looked upon in this point of view. For not to insist upon the reasons that prove the authority of this council to be extremely dubious, nor upon those which have induced some to regard its laws as grossly corrupted, and others, to consider them as entirely fictitious and spurious," it will be sufficient to observe the impossibility of proving by the *canon* in question, that the bishops of Sardis were of opinion, that, in all cases, an appeal might be made to the bishop of Rome, in quality of supreme judge." But supposing, for a moment, that this was their opinion, what would follow? surely, that pretext for assuming a supreme authority must be very slender, which arises only from the decree of one obscure council.

VII. Constantine the Great, by removing the seat of the empire to Byzantium, and building the city of Constantinople, raised up, in the bishop of this new metropolis, a formidable rival to the Roman pontiff, and a bulwark, which menaced a vigorous opposition to his growing authority. For, as the emperor, in order to render Constantinople a second Rome, enriched it with all the rights and privileges, honours and ornaments of the ancient capital of the world; so its bishop, measuring his own dignity and rank by the magnificence of the new city, and its eminence, as the august residence

The authority of the bishop of Constantinople is increased.

¶ On The imprudence of the emperor, and the precipitation of the bishops, were singularly discovered in the following event, which favoured extremely the rise and the ambition of the Roman pontiff. About the year 372, Valentinian enacted a law, empowering the bishop of Rome to examine and judge other bishops, that religious disputes might not be decided by profane or secular judges. The bishops assembled in council at Rome in 378, not considering the fatal consequences that must arise from this imprudent law, both to themselves and to the church, declared their approbation of it in the strongest terms, and recommended the execution of it in an address to the emperor Gratian. Some think indeed that this law empowered the Roman bishop to judge only the bishops within the limits of his jurisdiction, i. e. those of the suburbicarian provinces. Others are of opinion, that this power was given only for a time, and extended to those bishops alone, who were concerned in the present schism. This last notion seems probable; but still this privilege was an excellent instrument in the hands of sacerdotal ambition.

o See Mich. Geddes, *Diss. de canonibus Sardicensibus*, which is to be found in his *Miscellaneous Tracts*, tom. ii. p. 415.

¶ p The fourth canon of the council of Sardis, supposing it genuine and authentic, related only to the particular case of a bishop's being deposed by the neighbouring prelates, and demanding a permission to make his defence. In that case, this canon prohibited the election of a successor to the deposed bishop, before that the bishop of Rome had examined the cause, and pronounced sentence thereupon.

of the emperor, assumed an equal degree of dignity with the bishop of Rome, and claimed a superiority over all the rest of the episcopal order. Nor did the emperors disapprove of these high pretensions, since they considered their own dignity as connected, in a certain measure, with that of the bishop of their imperial city. Accordingly, in a council held at Constantinople, in the year 381, by the authority of Theodosius the Great, the bishop of that city was, during the absence of the bishop of Alexandria, and against the consent of the Roman prelate, placed, by the third *canon* of that council, in the first rank after the bishop of Rome, and, consequently, above those of Alexandria and Antioch. Nectarius was the first bishop who enjoyed these new honours accumulated upon the see of Constantinople. His successor, the celebrated John Chrysostom, extended still further the privileges of that see, and submitted to its jurisdiction all Thrace, Asia, and Pontus ;^a nor were the succeeding bishops of that imperial city destitute of a fervent zeal to augment their privileges, and to extend their dominion.

This certain revolution in the ecclesiastical government, and this unexpected promotion of the bishop of Byzantium to a higher rank, to the detriment of other prelates of the first eminence in the church, were productive of the most disagreeable effects. For this promotion not only filled the bishops of Alexandria with the bitterest aversion to those of Constantinople, but also excited those deplorable contentions and disputes between these latter and the Roman pontiffs, which were carried on, for many ages, with such various success, and concluded, at length, in the entire separation of the Latin and Greek churches.

VIII. The additions made by the emperors and others to the wealth, honours, and advantages of the clergy, were followed with a proportionable augmentation of vices and luxury, particularly among those of that sacred order, who lived in great and opulent cities ; and that many such additions were made to that order after the time of Constantine, is a matter that admits of no dispute. The *bishops*, on the one hand, contended with

The vices of the clergy.

^a See Petr. de Marca, *Diss. de Constantinop. Patriarchatus institutione*, which is subjoined to his book, *De concordia Sacerdotii et Imperii*. Mich. Lequien *Oriens, Christianus*, tom. i. p. 15. See also *An account of the government of the Christian church for the first six hundred years*, by Dr. Parker, bishop of Oxford, p. 245.

each other, in the most scandalous manner, concerning the extent of their respective jurisdictions, while, on the other, they trampled upon the rights of the people, violated the privileges of the inferior ministers, and imitated, in their conduct and in their manner of living, the arrogance, voluptuousness, and luxury of magistrates and princes.' This pernicious example was soon followed by the several ecclesiastical orders. The *presbyters*, in many places, assumed an equality with the bishops in point of rank and authority. We find also many complaints made at this time of the vanity and effeminacy of the *deacons*. Those more particularly of the presbyters and deacons, who filled the first stations of these orders, carried their pretensions to an extravagant length, and were offended at the notion of being placed upon an equal footing with their colleagues. For this reason they not only assumed the titles of *archpresbyters* and *archdeacons*, but also claimed a degree of authority and power much superior to that which was vested in the other members of their respective orders.

ix. Several writers of great reputation lived in this century, and were shining ornaments to the countries to which they belonged. Among those that flourished in Greece and in the eastern provinces, the following seem to deserve the first rank.

Eusebius Pamphilus, bishop of Cæsarea in Palestine, a man of immense reading, justly famous for his profound knowledge of ecclesiastical history, and singularly versed in other branches of literature, more especially in all the different parts of sacred erudition. These eminent talents and acquisitions were, however, accompanied with errors and defects, and he is said to have inclined toward the sentiments of those who look upon the three persons in the Godhead as different from each other in rank and dignity. Some have represented this learned prelate as a thorough Arian, but without foundation; if by an Arian be meant one who embraces the doctrines taught by Arius, presbyter of Alexandria.^s

r See Sulpit. Sever. *Hist. Sacr.* lib. i. cap. xxiii. p. 74, lib. ii. cap. xxxii. p. 248, cap. li. p. 292. *Dialog.* i. cap. xxi. p. 426. Add to this the account given by Clarkson, in his *Discourse upon Liturgies*, p. 228, of the corrupt and profligate manners of the clergy, and particularly, of the unbounded ambition of the bishops, to enlarge the sphere of their influence and authority.

s No writer has accused Eusebius of Arianism, with more bitterness and erudition, than Le Clerc, in the second of his *Epistolæ Eccles. et Criticæ*, which are subjoined to his *Ars Critica*, and Natalis Alexander, *Hist. Eccles. Nov. T. Sec. iv. Diss. xvii. p. 205.*

Peter of Alexandria, who is mentioned by Eusebius with the highest encomiums.¹

Athanasius, patriarch of Alexandria, celebrated on account of his learned and pious labours, and particularly famous for his warm and vigorous opposition to the Arians.^u

Basil, surnamed the Great, bishop of Cæsarea, who, in point of genius, controversial skill, and a rich and flowing eloquence, was surpassed by very few in this century.^w

Cyril, bishop of Jerusalem, who has left some catechetical discourses, which he delivered in that city; he has been accused by many of intimate connexions with the semi-arians.^x

John, surnamed Chrysostom, on account of his extraordinary eloquence, a man of a noble genius, governed successively the churches of Antioch and Constantinople,^y and left behind him several monuments of his profound and extensive erudition; as also discourses,^z which he had preached with vast applause, and which are yet extant.

Epiphanius, bishop of Salamis, in the isle of Cyprus, who wrote a book against all the heresies that had sprung up in the church until his time. This work has little or no reputation, as it is full of inaccuracies and errors, and discovers almost in every page the levity and ignorance of its author.^a

Gregory Nazianzen and Gregory of Nyssa, who have obtained a very honourable place among the celebrated theological and polemic writers of this century, and not

All, however, that these writers prove is, that Eusebius maintained, that there was a certain disparity and subordination between the persons of the Godhead. And suppose this to have been his opinion, it will not follow from thence that he was an Arian, unless that word be taken in a very extensive and improper sense. Nothing is more common than the abusive application of this term to persons, who have held opinions quite opposite to those of Arius, though perhaps they may have erred in other respects.

^t *Hist. Eccles. lib. ix. cap. vi.*

^u Eusebius Renaudotus, in his *History of the Patriarchs of Alexandria*, p. 83, has collected all the accounts which the oriental writers give of Athanasius, of whose works the learned and justly celebrated benedictine, Bernard Montfaucon, has given a splendid edition in three volumes in folio.

^w The works of Basil were published at Paris, in three volumes folio, by Julian Garnier, a learned benedictine.

^x The later editions of the works of this prelate, are those published by Mr. Milles and by Augustus Touttee, a benedictine monk.

^y It must not be understood by this, that Chrysostom was bishop of both these churches, he was *preacher* at Antioch, a function indeed, which before him was always attached to the episcopal dignity, and afterward patriarch of Constantinople.

^z The best edition of the works of Chrysostom, is that published by Montfaucon, in eleven volumes folio.

^a The works of Epiphanius have been translated into Latin, and published, with notes, by the learned Petau. His life written by Gervas, appeared at Paris, in 1738, in 4to.

without foundation, as their works sufficiently testify.^b Their reputation, indeed, would have been yet more confirmed, had they been less attached to the writings of Origen,^c and less infected with the false and vicious eloquence of the sophists.

Ephraim, the Syrian, who has acquired an immortal name by the sanctity of his conversation and manners, and by the multitude of those excellent writings in which he has combated the sectaries, explained the sacred writings, and unfolded the moral duties and obligations of Christians.^d

Besides the learned men now mentioned, there are several others, of whose writings but a small number have survived the ruins of time; such as Pamphilus, a martyr, and an intimate friend of Eusebius; Diodorus, bishop of Tarsus; Hosius, of Cordova; Didymus, of Alexandria; Eustathius, bishop of Antioch; Amphilochius, bishop of Iconium; Palladius, the writer of the *Lausaic History*;^e Macarius the elder and the younger; Apollinarius the elder; and some others, who are frequently mentioned on account of their erudition, and the remarkable events in which they were concerned.

x. The Latins also were not without writers of considerable note, the principal of whom we shall point out here.

The principal
Latin writers.

Hilary, bishop of Poitiers, acquired a name by *twelve books concerning the Trinity*, which he wrote against the Arians, and several other productions. He was a man of penetration and genius; notwithstanding which, he has, for the most part, rather copied in his writings Tertullian and Origen, than given us the fruits of his own study and invention.^f

^b There are some good editions of these two writers, which we owe to the care and industry of two learned French editors of the last century. [Viz. the abbot Billy, who published the works of Gregory Nazianzen at Paris, in two volumes folio, in the year 1608, with a Latin translation and learned notes; and father Frontum du Duc, who published those of Gregory of Nyssa, in 1605.]

^c The charge of *Origenism* seems to have been brought by the ancient writers only against Gregory of Nyssa.

^d There is a large and accurate account of this excellent writer in the *Biblioth. Oriental. Vaticana* of Joseph Simon Asseman, tom. i. p. 24. Several works of Ephraim have been published in Greek at Oxford, of which Gerard Vossius has given a Latin edition. An edition in Syriac, of the same works, was published at Rome not long ago, by Steph. Euod. Asseman.

^e This is the history of the *solitaries*, or *hermits*, which derived the name of *Lausaic* history from Lausus, governor of Cappadocia, at whose request it was composed, and to whom it was dedicated by Palladius.

^f There is a very accurate and ample account of Hilary, in the *Histoire Littéraire de la France*, tom. i. Siecle iv. p. 139—193. The best edition we have of his works is that published by the French benedictines.

Lactantius,^g the most eloquent of the Latin writers in this century, exposed the absurdity of the pagan superstitions in his *Divine Institutions*, which are written with uncommon purity and elegance. He wrote also upon other subjects; but was much more successful in refuting the errors of others, than careful in observing and correcting his own.^h

Ambrose, prefect, and afterward bishop of Milan, was not destitute of a certain degree of elegance both of genius and style; his sentiments of things were, by no means, absurd; but he did not escape the prevailing defect of that age, a want of solidity, accuracy, and order.

Jerome, a monk of Palestine, rendered, by his learned and zealous labours, such eminent services to the Christian cause, as will hand down his name with honour to the latest posterity. But this superior and illustrious merit was accompanied, and in some measure obscured, by very great defects. His complexion was excessively warm and choleric; his bitterness against those who differed from him, extremely keen; and his thirst of glory insatiable. He was so prone to censure, that several persons, whose lives were not only irreproachable, but even exemplary, became the objects of his unjust accusations. All this, joined to his superstitious turn of mind, and the enthusiastic encomiums which he lavished upon a false and degenerate sort of piety which prevailed in his time, sunk his reputation greatly, and that even in the esteem of the candid and the wise. His writings are voluminous, but not all equally adapted to instruct and edify. His interpretations of the holy Scriptures, and his *epistles*, are those of his productions which seem the most proper to be read with profit.^k

The fame of Augustin, bishop of Hippo, in Africa, filled

^g See a complete account of Lactantius, *Histoire Littéraire de la France*, tom. i. Siècle iv. p. 65.

^h Lactantius considers Christ's mission as having no other end, than that of leading mankind to virtue by the most sublime precepts, and the most perfect example. The charge of manicheism brought against this eminent writer, is refuted in the most evident and satisfactory manner by Dr. Lardner, in the seventh volume of his *Credibility of the Gospel History*, where the reader may find an ample and interesting account of his character and his writings. Among those who have been editors of the works of Lactantius, the most reputed are Buneman, Heumann, Walchius, and Languet de Fresnoy.

ⁱ The works of St. Ambrose have been published by the benedictines, in two volumes in folio.

^k The defects of Jerome are exposed by Le Cierc, in his *Quæstiones Hieronymianæ*, published at Amsterdam, in 12mo. in the year 1700. The benedictine monks have given an edition of the works of this father in five volumes, which was republished at Verona, by Vallarsius, with considerable additions.

the whole Christian world; and not without reason, as a variety of great and shining qualities were united in the character of that illustrious man. A sublime genius, an uninterrupted and zealous pursuit of truth, an indefatigable application, and invincible patience, a sincere piety, and a subtile and lively wit, conspired to establish his fame upon the most lasting foundations. It is however certain, that the accuracy and solidity of his judgment, were by no means proportionable to the eminent talents now mentioned; and that, upon many occasions, he was more guided by the violent impulse of a warm imagination, than by the cool dictates of reason and prudence. Hence that ambiguity which appears in his writings, and which has sometimes rendered the most attentive readers uncertain with respect to his real sentiments; and hence also the just complaints which many have made of the contradictions that are so frequent in his works, and of the levity and precipitation with which he set himself to write upon a variety of subjects, before he had examined them with a sufficient degree of attention and diligence.¹

Optatus, bishop of Milevi, in Numidia, acquired no small degree of reputation, by a work which he wrote in *six books* against the *schism* of the *Donatists*.^m

Paulinus, bishop of Nola, left behind him some poems and epistles, which are still extant; but are not remarkable either for their excellence or their meanness.ⁿ

Rufinus, presbyter of Aquileia, is famous on account of his Latin translations of Origen and other Greek writers, his commentaries on several passages of the holy Scriptures, and his bitter contest with Jerome. He would have obtained a very honourable place among the Latin writers of this century, had it not been his misfortune to have had the powerful and foul-mouthed Jerome for his adversary.^o

1 An accurate and splendid edition of the works of St. Augustin has been given by the benedictines since that of the divines of Louvain. This elegant edition bears the title of Antwerp, where it was published, with some augmentations, by Le Clerc, under the fictitious name of Jo. Phereponus. The Jesuits, however, pretend to have found many defects in this edition.

m Since the edition of Optatus, published by Albaspinæus, another has appeared, which we owe to the care and industry of Du Pin, doctor of the Sorbonne.

n The best edition of Paulinus is that which was published at Paris, in the year 1685, by Le Brun.

o Rufinus and Jerome had lived for many years in the most intimate and tender friendship, which ended in a violent rupture, on occasion of a translation which the former made of some of the works of Origen, particularly his *book of principles*. For an account of Rufinus, see Rich. Simon. *Critique de la Bibliothèque des Auteurs Eccles.* par M. Du Pin, tom. i. p. 124, &c. An ample account of the same writer is given by Austus Fontaninus, *Hist. Literar. Aquileiensis*, lib. v. p. 149.

As to Philastrius, Damasus, Juvenius, and other writers of that obscure class, we refer the reader for an account of them, to those authors whose principal design is to give an exact enumeration of the Christian writers. We shall add nevertheless to the list already given, Sulpitius Severus, by birth a Gaul, and the most eminent historical writer of this century ;* as also Prudentius a Spaniard, a poet of a happy and elegant genius.

CHAPTER III.

CONCERNING THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN THIS CENTURY.

I. THE fundamental principles of the Christian doctrine were preserved hitherto uncorrupted and entire in most churches, though it must be confessed, that The state of religion. they were often explained and defended in a manner that discovered the greatest ignorance, and an utter confusion of ideas. The disputes carried on in the council of Nice, concerning the three persons in the Godhead, afford a remarkable example of this, particularly in the language and explanations of those who approved of the decisions of that council. So little light, precision, and order, reigned in their discourses, that they appeared to substitute three gods in the place of one.

Nor did the evil end here ; for those vain fictions which an attachment to the Platonic philosophy, and to popular opinions, had engaged the greatest part of the Christian doctors to adopt, before the time of Constantine, were now confirmed, enlarged, and embellished in various ways. From hence arose that extravagant veneration for departed saints, and those absurd notions of a certain *fire* destined to purify separate souls, that now prevailed, and of which the public marks were every where to be seen. Hence also the celibacy of priests, the worship of images and relics, which, in process of time, almost utterly destroyed the Christian religion, or at least eclipsed its lustre, and corrupted its very essence in the most deplorable manner.

II. An enormous train of different superstitions were gradually substituted in the place of true religion and genuine piety. This odious revolution was the increase of superstition.

* See *Histoire Littéraire de la France*, tom. ii. p. 95 ; as also Hieron. a Prato, who has written, with great accuracy, the life of this historian.

owing to a variety of causes. A ridiculous precipitation in receiving new opinions, a preposterous desire of imitating the pagan rites, and of blending them with the Christian worship, and that idle propensity which the generality of mankind have toward a gaudy and ostentatious religion; all contributed to establish the reign of superstition upon the ruins of Christianity. Accordingly, frequent pilgrimages were undertaken to Palestine, and to the tombs of the martyrs, as if there alone the sacred principles of virtue, and the certain hope of salvation were to be acquired.^q The reins being once let loose to superstition, which knows no bounds, absurd notions and idle ceremonies multiplied every day. Quantities of dust and earth brought from Palestine, and other places remarkable for their supposed sanctity, were handed about as the most powerful remedies against the violence of wicked spirits, and were sold and bought every where at enormous prices.^r The public processions and supplications, by which the pagans endeavoured to appease their gods, were now adopted into the Christian worship, and celebrated with great pomp and magnificence in several places. The virtues that had formerly been ascribed to the heathen temples, to their lustrations, to the statues of their gods and heroes, were now attributed to Christian churches, to water consecrated by certain forms of prayer, and to the images of holy men. And the same privileges, that the former enjoyed under the darkness of paganism, were conferred upon the latter under the light of the gospel, or rather under that cloud of superstition that was obscuring its glory. It is true that as yet images were not very common: nor were there any statues at all. But, it is at the same time as undoubtedly certain, as it is extravagant and monstrous, that the worship of the *martyrs* was modelled, by degrees, according to the religious services that were paid to the gods before the coming of Christ.^s

From these facts, which are but small specimens of the state of Christianity at this time, the discerning reader will

^q See Gregor. Nysseni, *Orat. ad eos qui Hierosolymam adeunt*, tom. iii. opp. p. 568. Hieronymus, *Epist. xiii. ad Paulinum de instituto Monachi*, tom. i. p. 66. Jac. Godofred. *ad Codicem Theodosian.* tom. vi. p. 65. Petri Wesselingii. *Dissertat. de causis peregrinat. Hierosolymit. quam Itinerario Burdigalensi præmisit, inter vetera Romanor. Itineraria*, p. 537.

^r Augustinus, *De civitate Dei*, lib. xxii. cap. viii. § 6.

^s For a full account of this matter, see Beausobre, *Hist. du Manicheism*, tom. ii. p. 612.

easily perceive what detriment the church received from the peace and prosperity procured by Constantine, and from the imprudent methods employed to allure the different nations to embrace the gospel. The brevity we have proposed to observe in this history, prevents our entering into an ample detail of the dismal effects which arose from the progress and the baneful influence of superstition, now become universal.

III. This, indeed, among other unhappy effects, opened a wide door to the endless frauds of those odious impostors, who were so far destitute of all principle, as to enrich themselves by the ignorance and errors of the people. Rumours were artfully spread abroad of prodigies and miracles to be seen in certain places, a trick often practised by the heathen priests, and the design of these reports was to draw the populace, in multitudes, to these places, and to impose upon their credulity. These stratagems were generally successful; for the ignorance and slowness of apprehension of the people, to whom every thing that is new and singular appears miraculous, rendered them easily the dupes of this abominable artifice.^t Nor was this all; certain tombs were falsely given out for the sepulchres of saints^u and confessors; the list of the saints was augmented with fictitious names, and even robbers were converted into martyrs.^w Some buried the bones of dead men in certain retired places, and then affirmed, that they were divinely admonished by a dream, that the body of some friend of God lay there.^x Many, especially of the monks, travelled through the different provinces; and not only sold, with the most frontless impudence, their fictitious relics, but also deceived the eyes of the multitude with ludicrous combats with evil spirits or genii.^y A whole volume would be requisite to contain an enumeration of the various frauds which artful knaves practised, with success, to delude the ignorant, when true religion was almost entirely superseded by horrid superstition.

Hence pious
frauds.

^t Henry Dodwell, *Dissert. ii. in Irenæum*, § 56, p. 196. Le Clerc, in his *Appendix Augustinian*, pp. 492, 550, 575.

^u *Concil. Carthag. v. Canon xiv. tom. i. Conciliorum*, p. 988, edit. Harduini.

^w Sulpitius Severus, *De vita S. Martini*, cap. viii.

^x Augustin. *Sermone cccxviii. § i. tom. v. opp.* p. 886, edit. Antwerp.

^y See Godofred. *ad Cod. Theod. tom. iii. p. 172.* Augustin. *De opere Monachorum*, cap. xxviii. § 36, p. 364, tom. vi. opp. Hieronym. *Epist. ad Rusticum*, tom. i. opp. p. 45.

iv. Many of the learned in this century, undertook translations of the holy Scriptures, but few succeeded in this arduous enterprise. Among the many Latin versions of the sacred books, that of Jerome was distinguished by its undoubted superiority.^z The same ingenious and indefatigable writer, whose skill in the languages was by no means inconsiderable, employed much pains upon the Greek version of the seventy interpreters, in order to give a more correct edition of it than had appeared before his time; and it is said, that Eusebius, Athanasius, and Euthalius, had embarked in an undertaking of the same nature.^a The number of interpreters was very considerable, among whom Jerome, Hilary, Eusebius, Diodorus of Tarsus, Rufinus, Ephraim the Syrian, Theodore of Heraclea, Chrysostom, Athanasius, and Didymus, are generally esteemed worthy of the first rank. It is however certain, that even of these first rate commentators, few have discovered a just discernment, or a sound judgment, in their laborious expositions of the sacred writings. Rufinus, Theodore of Heraclea, and Diodorus of Tarsus, with some others, have indeed followed the natural signification of the words;^b the rest, after the example of Origen, are laborious in the search of far-fetched interpretations, and pervert the expressions of Scripture, which they but half understand, by applying them, or rather straining them, to matters with which they have no connexion.^c St. Augustin and Tychonius, endeavoured to establish plain and wise rules for the interpretation of Scripture, but their efforts were unsuccessful.^d

v. The doctrines of Christianity had not a better fate, than the sacred Scriptures from whence they are drawn. Origen was the great model whom the most eminent of the Christian doctors followed in their explications of the truths of the gospel, which were, of consequence, explained, according to the rules of

The method of explaining the doctrines of Christianity, followed at this time.

^z See Jo. Franc. Buddei *Isagoge ad Theologiam*, tom. ii. p. 1532.

^a Frickius, *De Canone N. T.* p. 18.

^b Simon, *Critique de la Bibliothèque des Auteurs Ecclesiast. par Du Pin.* tom. i. p. 51, 90, 129, tom. iv. p. 335; as also *Hist. Critique des principaux Commentateurs du N. T.* cap. vi. p. 88, &c.

^c See Gregor. Nazianz. *Carmen de Seipso*, in Tollius's *Insignia Itineris Italici*, p. 27, 57.

^d This may be seen in the six books which Augustin wrote concerning the *Christian doctrine*, and in the *rules of interpretation* laid down by Tychonius, which are to be found in the *Biblioth. Patr. Maxim.* tom. vi. p. 48.

the Platonic philosophy, as it was corrected and modified by that learned father for the instruction of the youth. Those who desire a more ample and accurate account of this matter, may consult Gregory Nazianzen among the Greeks, and Augustin among the Platonics. Latins, who were followed, for a long time, as the only patterns worthy of imitation, and who, next to Origen, may be considered as the parents and supporters of the *philosophical* or *scholastic theology*. They were both zealous Platonics, and holding, for certain, all the tenets of that philosopher that were not totally repugnant to the truths of Christianity, they laid them down as fundamental principles, and drew from them a great variety of subtile conclusions, which neither Christ nor Plato ever thought of.

This, however, was not the only sect that flourished at this time. That order of fanatics, who maintained that the knowledge of divine things was to be Mystics. acquired, not by reasoning, but by still contemplation, and by turning the eye of the mind upon itself in an entire absence from all external and sensible objects, became now more numerous, and increased every day. This appears from many circumstances, particularly from the swarms of monks that almost overspread the Christian world; and also from the books of Dionysius, the pretended chief of the mystics, which seem to have been forged in this century, under that venerable name, by some member of that fanatical tribe.

vi. Among the writers of this century, who published expositions of the Christian doctrine, the first place The didactic writers. is due to Cyril of Jerusalem, justly celebrated for his *catechetical discourses*, which nothing but a partial blindness to the truth could have induced any to attribute to a more modern author.^e Some have ranked Lactantius in the class of writers now under consideration, but without reason; since it is well known, that the labours of that eloquent author were rather employed in refuting the errors of idolatry, than in explaining the truths of the gospel. The *system of doctrine addressed to the clergy and laity*, and which, by many, has been attributed to Athanasius, seems to be of a much later date. There are, however, many things in the works of Chrysostom, Athanasius, the Gregories, and others, by which we may be enabled to form a just idea of the manner in which the

^e See Jo. Fechtii *Comment. de origine missarum in honorem sanctorum*, p. 404.

principal points of the Christian doctrine were explained by learned men in this century. We may more particularly be assisted in this matter, by the twelve books of Hilary, concerning the *trinity*; the *ancoratus* of Epiphanius, in which the doctrine of Scripture, concerning Christ and the *Holy Ghost*, is explained at large; the treatise of Pacian, concerning *baptism*, addressed to the *catechumens*; and the two books of Chrysostom upon the same subject. We need not mention here the various works of Jerome and Augustin, in which appear the laborious and noble efforts of these great men to inspire into the minds of the people just notions of religion, and to detect and refute the errors of those who were enemies of the truth.

VII. The controversial writings, that were levelled against those who were considered as heretics, were entirely destitute of that ancient simplicity, which is the natural and the beautiful garb of truth.

The state of
polemic di-
vinity.

That simplicity was now succeeded by logical subtilties, acute sophisms, sharp invectives, and other disingenuous arts, more worthy of the patrons of error, than of the defenders of the *wisdom that is from above*. We find, accordingly, many great and eminent men complaining of this abuse, and endeavouring, in vain, to oppose the muddy torrent of scurrility and dialectic that was overflowing the Christian schools.^f I pass in silence those rhetorical figures and ornaments, by which many evaded the arguments of their adversaries, and artfully perplexed the true state of the case; that odious custom also, of exciting the popular resentment against those who differed from them, that was observed by some, and that total want of order and perspicuity that was chargeable upon almost all. Several writers of this age are so far from disowning these indecent qualities, that they seem, on the contrary, to glory in them. It must indeed be observed, that the adversaries of the truth used the same inglorious arms, though this does not in the least diminish the reproach that is on this account due to its friends.

Disingenu-
ous methods
of disputing
used.

VIII. New methods of disputing were also added to those that were practised in former times; for the truth of doctrines was now proved by the number of martyrs that had professed them, by miracles, by

^f Methodius apud Epiphanium *Hæres.* lxiv. tom. i. opp. p. 563. Gregor. Nizian. in many places, and others.

the confession of *demons*, i. e. of persons possessed with evil spirits. The smallest degree of discernment will persuade any one how ambiguous this method of reasoning was; how dangerous to the truth, by furnishing innumerable occasions for the exercise of fraud and imposture. And I fear that the greatest part of those who used such arguments, however illustrious and respectable they might have been, will be found, upon examination, chargeable with the dangerous and criminal design of imposing upon their brethren. Ambrose, in his disputes with the Arians, produced men possessed with devils, who upon the approach of the relics of Gervasius and Protatius, were obliged to acknowledge, with loud cries, that the doctrine of the council of Nice, concerning the three persons of the Godhead, was true : and that of the Arians not only false, but also of most dangerous consequences. This testimony of the prince of darkness was regarded, by Ambrose, as an unexceptionable argument in favour of his hypothesis. The Arians, on the other hand, held this prodigy in the utmost derision, and maintained that Ambrose had suborned these infernal witnesses by a weighty bribe ;* and I make no doubt, but many will be more disposed to believe the Arians, than to credit Ambrose, though he be enrolled in the order of the saints, and they stigmatized in the list of heretics.^b

ix. There were, in this century, several controversialists of considerable note. For beside Apollinaris, The chief controversialists. Gregory Nazianzen, Cyril of Alexandria, and others, who distinguished themselves in the lists against the emperor Julian ; many others disputed with victorious force, and a happy success against the worshippers of the gods. Of this number were Lactantius, Athanasius, Julius Firmicus, Maternus, Apollinaris the younger, whose excellent writings against Porphyry are unhappily lost ; Augustin, in those books *of the City of God*, and in the three books against the pagans, which have also perished ; and above all, Eusebius of Cæsarea, in his *Evangelical Preparation*, and his *book against Hierocles*. Eusebius Emesenus, Diodore of Tarsus, and St. Chrysostom, whose treatise on that subject is still extant, employed their learned labours to bring over the Jews to the profession of

g Ambros. *Epist.* xxii. p. 878, &c. Paulinus, *vita Ambrosii*, p. 81.

h See Le Clerc, *Appendix Augustiniana*, p. 375. Gregor. Nyss. *vita Gregorii Neocæsariensis*, tom. ii. opp. p. 977, 978. Sulpitius Severus, *Hist. Sacr.* lib. ii. cap. xxxviii. p. 261.

Christianity. Ephraim of Syria,ⁱ James of Nisibis, Didymus and Audentius, attacked the whole body of heretics ; as did also Epiphanius, in his voluminous work *concerning heresies*, entitled *Panarium*, and Gregory Nazianzen with more brevity in his *discourse concerning faith*. The books of Augustin and Philastrius, on the same subject, contain rather a list than a refutation of the several sects.

x. If the growth and perfection of a science were to be estimated by the multitude of writers it produces, that of *morals* must have flourished greatly at this time, for the number of those was very considerable, who applied themselves to that excellent study. Among the eastern writers, James, bishop of Nisibis,^k and Ephraim, bishop of Syria, became eminent for their zeal and assiduity in inculcating the precepts of morality. The writings of Basil the Great, Gregory of Nyssa, Chrysostom, Ambrose, Augustin, and several others, upon moral subjects, are neither worthy of high encomiums, nor of entire contempt, as they contain a strange mixture of excellent reflections, and insipid details concerning the duties of the Christian life. Among the productions of these writers, many gave the preference to the three books of Ambrose *concerning the duty of the ministers of the church*, which are written in the manner of Cicero, and are justly commended for the pious intention they discover, and the beautiful sentiments they contain, though there be many things in them worthy of reprehension. But Marcarius an Egyptian monk,^l undoubtedly deserves the first rank among the practical writers of this time, as his works displayed, some few things excepted,^m the brightest and most lovely portraiture of sanctity and virtue.

xi. It must, however, be observed, that almost all the writers of this class are defective in several respects. They have been entirely negligent of order in their compositions, and have taken no sort of care to treat with method and precision the subjects they

The defect of these moral writers.

ⁱ See Jos. Sim. Asseman. *Biblioth. Oriental. Clement. Vatic.* tom. i. p. 118, 125. From the extracts which this learned compiler has given of the works of Ephraim, it appears that he was more distinguished by his piety and genius, than by his skill in the managing of controversy.

^k Jos. Sim. Asseman. in the work quoted in the preceding note, tom. i. p. 17, thinks that the writings attributed to the bishop of Nisibis, belong rather to the bishop of Saruga ; he however corrects, in some measure, this notion, in his *Addenda*, p. 558.

^l See the *Acta Sanctorum*, tom. i. Januar. p. 1005.

^m In the things here excepted by Dr. Mosheim, are some superstitious tenets that are to be found in the writings of Macarius, and also certain opinions that seem tainted with *Origenism*.

undertook to explain. They seldom define their terms, and pour out their pious, but incoherent ideas in fortuitous combinations, just as they come uppermost. They moreover neglect deducing the duties of mankind from their true principles, and even sometimes derive them from doctrines and precepts that are either manifestly false, or at least, whose nature and meaning are not determined with any degree of accuracy. And hence it is, that the greatest part of them are extremely defective, when they come to demonstrate the *obligations* of virtue, and the *incongruity* and *unfitness* of vice. These pretended demonstrations, instead of being deduced by proper conclusions from the reason of things and the divine laws, are nothing more than a collection of airy fancies, cold and insipid allegories, quaint and subtile conceits, which are more proper to afford amusement to the imagination, than light to the understanding, or conviction to the judgment.

XII. But however defective this method of inculcating the duties of morality may have been, it was much more tolerable than that which was followed by the amphibious disciples of Christ and Plato, those Alexandrian philosophers, of whom Ammonius Sacca was the chief. The *double doctrine* of morals which they invented, and which was compounded of two systems, the one surpassing the other in perfection, gained much ground in this century, to the great detriment of true religion. A circumstance every way proper to convince us of the growth and progress of this fanatical sect is, that those who in former times had inculcated a secret doctrine concerning divine things, totally different from that which was publicly propagated among the multitude, gave now the finishing touch to this doctrine, and formed it into a system. The famous Grecian fanatic, who gave himself out for Dionysius the Areopagite, disciple of St. Paul, and who, under the protection of this venerable name, gave laws and instructions to those that were desirous of raising their souls above all human things, in order to unite them to their great source by sublime contemplation, lived, most probably, in this century, though some place him before, others after the present period.ⁿ No sooner were the

The number of the mystics increased, and their doctrine propagated.

ⁿ Those who have written concerning this impostor, are enumerated by Jo. Franc. Buddeus, in his *Isagoge ad Theologiam*, lib. ii. cap. iv. p. 175. See also Jo. Launii *Judicium de scriptis Dionysii*, tom. ii. opp. part i. p. 562. La Croze, in his *Histoire du Chris-*

writings and instructions of this fanatic handed about among the Greeks and Syrians, and particularly among the *solitaries* and monks, than a gloomy cloud of religious darkness began to spread itself over the minds of many. An incredible number of proselytes was added to that chimerical sect, who maintained, that communion with God was to be sought by mortifying sense, by withdrawing the mind from all external objects, by macerating the body with hunger and labour, and by a holy sort of indolence, which confined all the activity of the soul to a lazy contemplation of things spiritual and eternal.

XIII. The progress of this sect appears evidently from the prodigious number of solitary monks and sequestered virgins, which, upon the return of tranquillity to the church, had overrun the whole Christian world with an amazing rapidity. Many of this order of men had, for a long time, been known among the Christians, and had led silent and solitary lives in the deserts of Egypt; but Antony was the first who formed them into a regular body, engaged them to live in society with each other, and prescribed to them fixed rules for the direction of their conduct.^o These regulations, which Antony had made in Egypt, were, the year following, introduced into Palestine and Syria by his disciple Hilarion. Almost about the same time, Aones, or Eugenius, with his companions, Gaddanus and Azyzus, instituted the monastic order in Mesopotamia, and the adjacent countries;^p and their example was followed with such rapid success, that in a short time the whole east was filled with a lazy set of mortals, who, abandoning all human connexions, advantages, pleasures, and concerns, wore out a languishing and miserable life amidst the hardships of want, and various kinds of suffering, in order to arrive at a more close and rapturous communion with God and angels. The Christian church would never have been disgraced by this cruel and unsociable enthusiasm, nor would any have

Monkish societies.

lianisme d'Ethiope, p. 10, endeavours to prove that Synesius, an Egyptian bishop, and also the most celebrated philosopher of the fifth century, composed the writings attributed to Dionysius, in order to defend the doctrine of those who held that Christ was only possessed of *one nature*. The arguments, however, of La Croze, are weak. Nor are those more satisfactory which the learned Barratiere has employed, in a dissertation added to his book *De successione Rom. Episcop.* p. 286, to prove that Dionysius of Alexandria was the true author of the writings in question.

^o For a full of account of Antony, and the *discipline* established by him, see the *Acta Sanctorum*, tom. ii. Januar. ad d. 17, p. 107.

^p See Jos. Simon. *Asseman. Biblioth. Oriental. Clement. Vatican.* tom. iii. part ii. p. 13.

been subjected to those keen torments of mind and body to which it gave rise, had not many Christians been unwarily caught by the specious appearance, and the pompous sound of that maxim of the ancient philosophy, "that, in order to the attainment of true felicity and communion with God, it was necessary that the soul should be separated from the body even here below, and that the body was to be macerated and mortified for this purpose."

xiv. From the east this gloomy institution passed into the west, and first into Italy and its neighbouring islands, though it is utterly uncertain who trans-^{The progress of monkery.}planted it thither.^q St. Martin, the celebrated bishop of Tours, erected the first monasteries in Gaul, and recommended this religious solitude with such power and efficacy, both by his instructions and his example, that his funeral is said to have been attended by no less than two thousand monks.^r From hence the monastic discipline extended gradually its progress through the other provinces and countries of Europe.

It is however proper to observe, that there was a great difference in point of austerity between the western and oriental monks; the former of whom could never be brought to bear the several rules to which the latter voluntarily submitted. And, indeed, the reason of this difference may be partly derived from the nature of the respective climates in which they dwelt. The European countries abound not so much with delirious fanatics, and with persons of a morose and austere complexion, as those arid regions that lie toward the burning east; nor are our bodies capable of supporting that rigorous and abstemious method of living which is familiar and easy to those who are placed under a glowing firmament, and breathe in a sultry and scorching atmosphere. It was, therefore, rather the name only, than the thing itself, which was transported into the

^q Most writers, following the opinion of Baronius, maintain, that St. Athanasius brought the monastic institution from Egypt into Italy, in the year 340, and was the first who built a monastery at Rome. See Mabillonius, *Præf. ad Acta Sanctorum Ord. Bened.* tom. i. p. 9. But the learned Lewis Ant. Muratori combats this opinion, and pretends that the first monastery known in Europe, was erected at Milan, *Antiq. Italicar. medii ævi*, tom. v. p. 364. Just. Fontaninus in his *Historia Liter. Aquileiens.* p. 155, affirms that the first society of monks was formed at Aquileia. None of these writers produce unexceptionable evidence for their opinions. If we may give credit to the Bellerini, *Disser.* ii. *ad Zenonem Veronensem*, p. 115, the first convent of nuns was erected toward the end of this century, at Verona, by Zeno, bishop of that city.

^r See Sulpit. Sever. *De vita Martini*, cap. x. p. 17, edit. Veron. where the method of living, used by the Martinian monks, is accurately described. See also *Histoire Littéraire de la France*, tom. i. part ii. p. 42.

European countries, though this name was, indeed, accompanied with a certain resemblance or distant imitation of the monastic life instituted by Antony and others in the east.

xv. The monastic order, of which we have been taking a general view, was distributed into several classes. Different orders of monks. It was first divided into two distinct orders, of which the one received the denomination of cœnobites, the other that of eremites. Cœnobites and eremites, or hermits. The former lived together in a fixed habitation, and made up one large community under a chief, whom they called *father*, or *abbot*, which signifies the same thing in the Egyptian language. The latter drew out a wretched life in perfect solitude, and were scattered here and there in caves, in deserts, in the hollow of rocks, sheltered from the wild beasts only by the cover of a miserable cottage, in which each one lived sequestered from the rest of his species.

The anacorites were yet more excessive in the austerity of their manner of living than the eremites. Anacorites. They frequented the wildest deserts without either tents or cottages; nourished themselves with the roots and herbs which grew spontaneously out of the uncultivated ground; wandered about without having any fixed abode, and reposing wherever the approach of night happened to find them; and all this, that they might *avoid the view and the society of mortals.*^s

The last order of monks that come now under consideration were those wandering fanatics, or rather impostors, whom the Egyptians called sarabaites, Sarabaites. who, instead of procuring a subsistence by honest industry, travelled through various cities and provinces, and gained

^s This difference between the *discipline* of the eastern and western monks, and the cause of it, have been ingeniously remarked by Sulpitius Severus, *Dial. i. De vita Martini*, p. 65, edit. Veron. where one of the interlocutors, in the dialogue, having mentioned the abstemious and wretched diet of the Egyptian monks, adds what follows: "Placente tibi prandium, fasciculus herbarum et panis dimidijs viris quinque?" To this question the Gaul answers, "Facis tuo more, qui nullam occasionem omittis, quin nos, i. e. the Gallic monks, edacitatis fatiges. Sed facis inhumane, qui nos Gallos homines cogis exemplo Angelorum vivere; sed contentus sit hoc prandio Cyrenensis ille, cui vel necessitas vel natura est esurire; nos, quod tibi sæpe testatus sum, Galli sumus." The same speaker, in the above-mentioned dialogue, ch. viii. p. 69, 70, reproaches Jerome with having accused the monks of gluttony; and proceeds thus: "Sentio de orientalibus illum potius Monachis, quam de occidentalibus disputasse. Nam edacitas in Græcis et Orientalibus gula est, in Gallis natura." It appears, therefore, that immediately after the introduction of the monastic order into Europe, the western differed greatly from the eastern monks in their manners and discipline, and were, in consequence of this, accused by the latter of voraciousness and gluttony.

t See Sulpit. Sever. *Dial. i. De vita Martini*, cap. x. p. 80, edit. Veron.

a maintenance by fictitious miracles, by selling relics to the multitude, and other frauds of a like nature.

Many of the cœnobites were chargeable with vicious and scandalous practices. This order, however, was not so universally corrupt as that of the sarabaites, who were, for the most part, profligates of the most abandoned kind. As to the eremites, they seem to have deserved no other reproach than that of a delirious and extravagant fanaticism." All these different orders were hitherto composed of the *laity*, and were subject to the jurisdiction and the inspection of the bishops. But many of them were now adopted among the *clergy*, and that even by the command of the emperors. Nay, the fame of monastic piety and sanctity became so universal, that bishops were frequently chosen out of that fanatical order.^w

xvi. If the enthusiastic frenzy of the monks exaggerated, in a manner pernicious to the interests of morality, the discipline that is obligatory upon Christians, the interests of virtue and true religion suffered yet more grievously by two monstrous errors, which were almost universally adopted in this century, and became a source of innumerable calamities and mischiefs in the succeeding ages. The first of these maxims was, that *it was an act of virtue to deceive and lie, when by that means the interests of the church might be promoted*; and the second equally horrible, though in another point of view, was, *that errors in religion, when maintained and adhered to after proper admonition, were punishable with civil penalties and corporal tortures*. The former of these erroneous maxims was now of a long standing; it had been adopted for some ages past, and had produced an incredible number of ridiculous fables, fictitious prodigies, and pious frauds, to the unspeakable detriment of that glorious cause in which they were employed. And it must be frankly confessed, that the greatest men, and most eminent saints of this century, were more or less tainted with the infection of this corrupt principle, as will appear evidently to such

Two most pernicious maxims adopted in this century.

^u Whoever is desirous of a fuller account of the vices of the monks in this century, may consult the above-mentioned dialogue of Sulp. Sever. cap. viii. p. 69, 70, cap. xxi. p. 88, where he particularly chastises the arrogance and ambition of those of them, who aspired to clerical honours. See also *Dial.* ii. cap. viii. p. 112. *Dial.* ii. cap. xv. p. 144, 145. *Conuslrat. Appollonii et Zachæi*, published by Dacherius *Spicileg.* tom. i. lib. iii. cap. iii. p. 35.

^w See J. Godofred. *ad codicem Theodosianum*, tom. vi. part i. p. 76, 106, edit. Rittiana.

as look with an attentive eye into their writings and their actions. We would willingly except from this charge, Ambrose and Hilary, Augustin, Gregory Nizianzen and Jerome ; but truth, which is more respectable than these venerable fathers, obliges us to involve them in the general accusation. We may add also, that it was probably the contagion of this pernicious maxim, that engaged Sulpitius Severus, who is far from being in the general a puerile or credulous historian, to attribute so many miracles to St. Martin. The other maxim, relating to the justice and expediency of punishing error, was introduced with those serene and peaceful times which the accession of Constantine to the imperial throne procured to the church. It was from that period approved by many, enforced by several examples during the contests that arose with the Priscillianists and Donatists, confirmed and established by the authority of Augustin, and thus transmitted to the following ages.

XVII. When we cast an eye toward the lives and morals of Christians at this time, we find, as formerly, a mixture of good and evil ; some eminent for their piety, others infamous for their crimes. The number however of immoral and unworthy Christians began so to increase, that the examples of real piety and virtue became extremely rare. When the terrors of persecution were totally dispelled ; when the church, secured from the efforts of its enemies, enjoyed the sweets of prosperity and peace ; when the most of the bishops exhibited to their flock the contagious examples of arrogance, luxury, effeminacy, animosity, and strife, with other vices too numerous to mention ; when the inferior rulers and doctors of the church fell into a slothful and opprobrious negligence of the duties of their respective stations, and employed in vain wranglings and idle disputes, that zeal and attention that were due to the culture of piety and to the instruction of their people, and when, to complete the enormity of this horrid detail, multitudes were drawn into the profession of Christianity, not by the power of conviction and argument, but by the prospect of gain and the fear of punishment ; then it was indeed no wonder that the church was contaminated with shoals of profligate Christians, and that the virtuous few were, in a manner, oppressed and overwhelmed with the superior numbers of the wicked and licentious. It is true, that the same rigorous penitence

The lives and
and morals of
Christians.

which had taken place before Constantine the Great, continued now in full force against flagrant transgressors ; but when the reign of corruption becomes universal, the vigour of the laws yields to its sway, and a weak execution defeats the purposes of the most salutary discipline. Such was now unhappily the case ; the age was sinking daily from one period of corruption to another ; the great and the powerful sinned with impunity ; and the obscure and the indigent felt alone the severity of the laws.

XVIII. Religious controversies among Christians were frequent in this century ; and, as it often happens The Meletian controversy. in the course of civil affairs, external peace gave occasion and leisure for the fomenting intestine troubles and dissensions. We shall mention some of the principal of these controversies, which produced violent and obstinate schisms, not so much indeed by their natural tendency, as by incidental occurrences.

In the beginning of this century, about the year 306, arose the famous Meletian controversy, so called from its author, and which for a long time divided the church. Peter, bishop of Alexandria, had deposed, from the episcopal office, Meletius, bishop of Lycopolis, in the Upper Egypt. The reasons that occasioned this violent act of authority have not been sufficiently exposed.

The partisans of Peter allege, that Meletius had sacrificed to the gods, and charge him also with various crimes ;^x while others affirm, that his only failing was an excessive severity against the *lapsed*.^y Be that as it will, Meletius treated the sentence of Peter with the utmost contempt, and did not only continue to perform all the duties of the episcopal function, but even assumed the right of consecrating presbyters ; a privilege which, by the laws of Egypt, belonged only to the bishop of Alexandria. The venerable gravity and eloquence of Meletius drew many to his party, and, among others, a considerable number of monks adhered to his cause. The council of Nice made several ineffectual attempts to heal this breach ; the Meletians, on the other hand, whose chief aim was to oppose the authority of the bishop of Alexandria, joined themselves to the Arians, who were his irreconcilable enemies. Hence it

^x Athanasius, *Apologia secunda*, tom. i. opp. p. 777.

^y Epiphanius, *Hæres.* lxxviii. tom. i. opp. p. 716. See also Dion. Petavius, *Not. in Epiphanium*, tom. ii. p. 274. Sam. Basnagii *Exercitatio. de rebus sacris contra Baronium*.

happened, that a dispute, which had for its first object the authority and jurisdiction of the bishop of Alexandria, degenerated, gradually, into a religious controversy. The Meletian party was yet subsisting in the fifth century.^z

XIX. Some time after this, a certain person, named Eustathius, was the occasion of great disorders and divisions in Armenia, Pontus, and the neighbouring countries; and was condemned and excommunicated, in consequence thereof, by the council of Gangra, which was held not long after that of Nice. Whether this was the same Eustathius who was bishop of Sebastia in Armenia, and the chief of the semi-arians; or whether the ancient historians have confounded together two different persons of the same name, is a matter extremely difficult to determine.^a However that be, the leader of the Eustathian sect does not seem so much chargeable with a corruption of any religious doctrine, as with having set up a fanatical form of sanctity; an extravagant system of practical discipline, destructive of the order and happiness of society. For he prohibited marriage, the use of wine and flesh, feasts of charity, and other things of that nature. He prescribed immediate divorce to those who were joined in wedlock, and is said to have granted to children and servants the liberty of violating the commands of their parents and masters upon pretexts of a religious nature.^b

XX. Lucifer, bishop of Cagliari in Sardinia, a man remarkable for his prudence, the austerity of his character, and the steadiness of his resolution and courage, was banished by the emperor Constantius, for having defended the Nicene doctrine, concerning the three persons in the godhead. He broke the bonds of fraternal communion with Eusebius, bishop of Vercil, in the year 363, because the latter had consecrated Paulinus bishop of Antioch; and he afterward separated himself from the whole church, on account of the act of absolution it had passed in favour of those, who, under Constantius, had deserted to the Arians.^c It is at least certain, that the small

^z Socrates, *Hist. Eccles.* lib. i. c. vi. p. 14. Theodoret. *Hist. Eccles.* lib. i. cap. viii, 548.

^a See Sam. Basnag, *Annal. Polit. Eccles.* tom. ii. p. 840.

^b Socrates, *Hist. Eccles.* lib. i. c. xliii. p. 156. Sozomenus, *Hist. Eccles.* lib. iii. cap. xiv. p. 520, lib. iv. cap. xxiv. p. 581. Epiphani. *Hæres.* lxvi. p. 910. Philostorgius, *Hist. Eccles.* lib. iii. cap. xvi. p. 53, 59. Wolff. Gundling. *Not. ad Concilium Gangrense*, p. 9.

^c Rufin. *Hist. Eccles.* lib. i. cap. xxx. p. 174. Socrates *Hist. Eccles.* lib. iii. cap. ix. p. 181, &c. See also Tillemont, *memoires pour servir a l'Histoire de l'Eglise*, tom. vii. p. 521, edit. Paris.

tribe that followed this prelate, under the title of Luciferians, avoided scrupulously and obstinately all commerce and fellowship both with those bishops who had declared themselves in favour of the Arians, and with those also who consented to an absolution for such as returned from this desertion, and acknowledged their error; and thus of consequence they dissolved the bonds of their communion with the church in general.^d The Luciferians are also said to have entertained erroneous notions concerning the human soul, whose generation they considered as of a carnal nature, and maintained that it was transfused from the parents into the children.^e

XXI. About this time Ærius, a presbyter, monk, and semi-arian, erected a new sect, and excited divisions throughout Armenia, Pontus, and Cappadocia, by propagating opinions different from those that were commonly received. One of his principal tenets was, that bishops were not distinguished from presbyters by any divine right; but that, according to the institution of the New Testament, their offices and authority were absolutely the same. How far Ærius pursued this opinion, through its natural consequences, is not certainly known; but we know, with the utmost certainty, that it was highly agreeable to many good Christians, who were no longer able to bear the tyranny and arrogance of the bishops of this century.

The Ærian controversy.

There were other things in which Ærius differed from the common notions of the time; he condemned prayers for the dead, stated fasts, the celebration of Easter, and other rites of that nature, in which the multitude erroneously imagine that the life and soul of religion consists.^f His great purpose seems to have been that of reducing Christianity to its primitive simplicity; a purpose, indeed, laudable and noble when considered in itself; though the principles from whence it springs, and the means by which it is executed, are generally, in many respects, worthy of censure, and may have been so in the case of this reformer.^g

^d See in the *works* of Sirmond, tom. ii. p. 229, &c. *A book of prayers*, addressed to Theodosius by Marcellinus and Faustinus, who were Luciferians.

^e Augustin. *De Hæres.* cap. lxxxi. with the observations of Lamb. Danmaus, p. 346.

^f Epiphanius, *Hæres.* lxxv. p. 905. Augustin. *De Hæres.* cap. liii.

^g The desire of reducing religious worship to the greatest possible simplicity, however rational it may appear in itself, and abstractedly considered, will be considerably

XXII. The progress of superstition in this century, and the erroneous notions that prevailed concerning the true nature of religion, excited the zeal and the efforts of many to stem the torrent. But their labours only exposed them to infamy and reproach. The most eminent of these worthy opposers of the reigning superstitions was Jovinian, an Italian monk, who, toward the conclusion of this century, taught first at Rome, and afterward at Milan, that all those who kept the vows they made to Christ at their baptism, and lived according to those rules of piety and virtue laid down in the gospel, had an equal title to the rewards of futurity; and that, consequently, those who passed their days in unsociable celibacy, and severe mortifications and fastings, were in no respect more acceptable in the eye of God, than those who lived virtuously in the bonds of marriage, and nourished their bodies with moderation and temperance. These judicious opinions, which many began to adopt, were first condemned by the church of Rome, and afterwards by Ambrose, in a council held at Milan in the year 390.^b The emperor Honorius seconded the authoritative proceedings of the bishops by the violence of the secular arm, answered the judicious reasonings of Jovinian by the terror of coercive and penal laws, and banished this pretended heretic to the island Boa. Jovinian published his opinions in a book, against which Jerome, in the following century, wrote a most bitter and abusive treatise, which is still extant.ⁱ

moderated in such as bestow a moment's attention upon the imperfection and infirmities of human nature in its present state. Mankind, generally speaking, have too little elevation of mind to be much affected with those forms and methods of worship, in which there is nothing striking to the outward senses. The great difficulty here lies in determining the lengths which it is prudent to go in the accommodation of religious ceremonies to human infirmity; and the grand point is to fix a medium, in which a due regard may be shown to the senses and imagination, without violating the dictates of right reason, or tarnishing the purity of true religion. It has been said, that the Romish church has gone too far in its condescension to the infirmities of mankind. And this is what the ablest defenders of its motley worship have alleged in its behalf. But this observation is not just; the church of Rome has not so much accommodated itself to *human weakness*, as it has abused that *weakness*, by taking occasion from it to establish an endless variety of ridiculous ceremonies, destructive of true religion, and only adapted to promote the riches and despotism of the clergy, and to keep the multitude still hoodwinked in their ignorance and superstition. How far a just antipathy to the church puppet-shows of the papists has unjustly driven some protestant churches into the opposite extreme, is a matter that I shall not now examine, though it certainly deserves a serious consideration.

^b Hieronymus in *Jovinianum*, tom. ii. opp. Augustin. *de Hæres.* cap. lxxxii. Ambros. *Epist.* vi. &c.

ⁱ *Codex Theodosianus*, tom. iii. p. 218. tom. vi. p. 193.

XXIII. Among all the religious controversies that divided the church, the most celebrated, both for their importance and their duration, were those relating to Origen and his doctrine.

Controversies
relating to
Origen.

This illustrious man, though he had been, for a long time, charged with many errors, was held by the most part of Christians in the highest veneration, and his name was so sacred as to give weight to the cause in which it appeared. The Arians, who were sagacious in searching for succours on all sides to maintain their sect, affirmed that Origen had adopted their opinions. In this they were believed by some, who consequently included this great man in the hatred they entertained against the sect of the Arians. But several writers of the first learning and note opposed this report, and endeavoured to vindicate the honour of their master from these injurious insinuations. The most eminent of these was Eusebius, bishop of Cæsarea, as appears by his learned work, entitled, *An Apology for Origen*. It is extremely probable, that these clamours raised against the memory and reputation of a man, whom the whole Christian world beheld with respect, would have been soon hushed, had it not been for the rise of new commotions, which proceeded from another source, and of which we shall treat in the following section.

XXIV. The monks in general, and the Egyptian monks in particular, were enthusiastically devoted to Origen, and spared no labour to propagate his opinions in all places. Their zeal, however, met with opposition, nor could they persuade all Christians of the truth and soundness of the notions invented or adopted by that eminent writer. Hence arose a controversy concerning the reasons and foundations of *Origenism*, which was at first managed in a private manner, but afterward, by degrees, broke out into an open flame. Among the numerous partisans of Origen, was John, bishop of Jerusalem, which furnished Epiphanius and Jerome with a pretext to cast an odium upon this prelate, against whom they had been previously exasperated on other accounts. But the ingenious bishop conducted matters with such admirable dexterity, that in defending himself, he vindicated, at the same time, the reputation of Origen, and drew to his party the whole monastic body; and also a prodigious

The progress
of these con-
troversies.

number of those who were spectators of this interesting combat. This was but the beginning of the vehement contests concerning the doctrine of Origen, that were carried on, both in the eastern and western provinces. These contests were particularly fomented in the west by Rufinus, a presbyter of Aquileia, who translated into Latin several books of Origen, and insinuated, with sufficient plainness, that he acquiesced in the sentiments they contained,^k which drew upon him the implacable rage of the learned and choleric Jerome. But these commotions seemed to cease in the west after the death of Rufinus, and the efforts which men of the first order made to check, both by their authority and by their writings, the progress of *Origenism* in those parts.

xxv. The troubles which the writings and doctrines of Origen excited in the east were more grievous and lasting. Theophilus, bishop of Alexandria, irritated, for several reasons, against the Nitrian monks, represented them as infected with the contagion of *Origenism*, and ordered them to give up and abandon all the productions of Origen. The monks refused obedience to this command, and alleged in their defence two considerations; the one, that the passages in the writings of this holy and venerable man, which seemed to swerve from the truth, were inserted in them by ill designing heretics; and the other, that a few things worth thy censure were not sufficient to justify the condemnation of the rest. Matters were but more exasperated by this refusal of submission to the order of Theophilus; for this violent prelate called a council at Alexandria, in the year 399, in which, having condemned the followers of Origen, he sent a band of soldiers to drive the monks from their residence on mount Nitria. The poor monks, scattered abroad thus by an armed force, fled first to Jerusalem, from whence they retired afterward to Scythopolis; and finding that they could live here in security and peace, determined, at length, to set sail for Constantinople, and there plead their cause in presence of the emperor.^l The issue of these proceedings comes under the history of the following century.

Controversy
in the east,
concerning
the writing
of Origen.

^k See Just. Fontaninus, *Historia Literar. Aquileiensis*, lib. iv. cap. iii. p. 177, &c.

^l See Peter. Daniel Huet. *Origenianorum*, lib. ii. cap. iv. p. 196. Louis Doucin, *Histoire de Origenisme*, livr. iii. p. 95. Hier. a Prato, *Diss. vi. in Sulpitium Severum de Monachis ob Origenis nomen ex Nitria totaque Ægypto pulsus*, p. 273. Veron. 1741. folio.

It is, however, necessary to observe here, that we must not reduce to the same class all those who are called Origenists in the records of this century. For this ambiguous title is applied to persons who differed widely in their religious notions. Sometimes it merely signifies such friends of Origen, as acknowledged his writings to have been adulterated in many places, and who were far from patronising the errors of which he was accused; in other places, this title is attributed to those who confess Origen to be the author of the doctrines which are imputed to him, and who resolutely support and defend his opinions; of which latter there was a considerable number among the monastic orders.

CHAPTER IV.

CONCERNING THE RITES AND CEREMONIES USED IN THE CHURCH DURING THIS CENTURY.

I. WHILE the Roman emperors were studious to promote the honour of Christianity, by the auspicious protection they afforded to the church, and their most zealous efforts to advance its interests, the inconsiderate and ill directed piety of the bishops cast a cloud over the beauty and simplicity of the Gospel, by the prodigious number of rites and ceremonies which they had invented to embellish it. And here we may apply that well-known saying of Augustin,^m that *the yoke under which the Jews formerly groaned, was more tolerable than that imposed upon many Christians in his time.* The rites and institutions, by which the Greeks, Romans, and other nations, had formerly testified their religious veneration for fictitious deities, were now adopted, with some slight alterations, by Christian bishops, and employed in the service of the true God. We have already mentioned the reasons alleged for this imitation, so proper to disgust all who have a just sense of the native beauty of genuine Christianity. These fervent heralds of the gospel, whose zeal outran their candour and ingenuity, imagined that the nations would receive Christianity with more facility, when they saw the rites and ceremonies to which they

A multitude
of ceremonies
introduced.

^m Augustin. *Epist. cxix. ad Januarium*, according to the ancient division.

were accustomed, adopted in the church, and the same worship paid to Christ and his martyrs, which they had formerly offered to their idol deities. Hence it happened, that in these times, the religion of the Greeks and Romans differed very little, in its external appearance, from that of the Christians. They had both a most pompous and splendid ritual. Gorgeous robes, mitres, tiaras, wax tapers, crosiers,ⁿ processions,^o lustrations, images, gold and silver vases, and many such circumstances of pageantry, were equally to be seen in the heathen temples and the Christian churches.

II. No sooner had Constantine the Great abolished the superstitions of his ancestors, than magnificent churches were every where erected for the Christians, which were richly adorned with pictures and images, and bore a striking resemblance to the pagan temples, both in their outward and inward form.^p Of these churches some were built over the tombs of martyrs, and were frequented only at stated times; while others were set apart for the ordinary assemblies of Christians in divine worship. The former were called *martyria*, from the places where they were erected; and the latter *tituli*.^q Both of them were consecrated with great pomp, and with certain rites borrowed, mostly, from the ancient laws of the Roman pontiffs.

But our wonder will not cease here; it will rather be augmented when we learn, that at this time, it was looked upon as an essential part of religion to have in every country a multitude of churches;

Magnificent churches erected.

Origin of the right of patronage.

ⁿ In The *Lituus*, which, among the ancient Romans was the chief ensign of the augurs, and which derived its name from its resemblance to the *military trumpet*, became a mark of episcopal dignity. We call it the *crosier*, or bishop's staff.

^o The word *supplicationes*, which I have rendered by that of *processions*, signified among the pagans, those solemn and public acts of *gratitude* for national blessings, or *deprecation* of national calamities, which were expressed by the whole body of the people by a religious approach to the temples of the gods, which, by a decree of the senate, were open for all without distinction. See *Cic. Catil.* iii. 6. *Liv.* x. 23.

^p See Ezek. Spanheim, *Preuves sur les Césars de Julien*, p. 47, and particularly Le Brun's *Explication littéraire et Historique des Cérémonies de la Messe*, tom. ii. p. 101. A description of these churches may be found in Eusebius, *De vita Constantini M.* lib. iii. cap. xxxv. and an exact plan of the interior structure of them is accurately engraved in bishop Beverege's *Adnotationes in Pandectas Cononum*, tom. ii. p. 70, and in Frederick Spanheim's *Institut. Hist. Eccles.* tom. i. opp. p. 860. It must also be observed, that certain parts of the Christian churches were formed after the model of the Jewish temples. See Camp. Vitranga, *De synagoga vetera*, lib. iii. p. 466.

^q Jo. Mabillon. *Musei Italici*, tom. ii. in *Comment. ad ordin. Roman.* p. xvi. ^r The *tituli* were the smaller churches, so called from this circumstance, that the presbyters, who officiated in them, were called by the names of the places where they were erected, i. e. received titles which fixed them to those particular cures.

and here we must look for the true origin of what is called the *right of patronage*, which was introduced among Christians with no other view than to encourage the opulent to erect a great number of churches, by giving them the privilege of appointing the ministers that were to officiate in them.^r This was a new instance of that servile imitation of the ancient superstitions which reigned at this time; for it was a very common notion among the people of old, that nations and provinces were happy and free from danger, in proportion to the number of fanes and temples, which they consecrated to the worship of gods and heroes, whose protection and succour could not fail, as it was thought, to be shed abundantly upon those, who worshipped them with such zeal, and honoured them with so many marks of veneration and respect. The Christians unhappily contracted the same erroneous way of thinking. The greater the number of temples was which they erected in honour of Christ, and his chosen friends and followers, the more sanguine did their expectations grow of powerful succours from them, and of a peculiar interest in the divine protection. They were so weak as to imagine that God, Christ, and celestial intelligences, were delighted with those marks and testimonies of respect, which captivate the hearts of wretched mortals.

III. The Christian worship consisted in hymns, prayers, the reading of the Scriptures, a discourse addressed to the people, and concluded with the celebration of the Lord's supper. To these were added various rites, more adapted to please the eyes, and strike the imagination, than to kindle in the heart the pure and sacred flame of genuine piety.^s We are not however to think, that the same method of worship was uniformly followed in every Christian society, for this was far from being the case. Every bishop, consulting his own private judgment, and taking into consideration the nature of the times, the genius of the country in which he lived, and the character and temper of those whom he was appointed

The form of
public wor-
ship.

^r Just. Henn. Bohmeri *Jus. Eccles. Protestant*, tom. iii. p. 466. *Bibliothèque Italique*, tom. v. p. 166.

^s For a full account of the form of public worship, or the *liturgies* of this century, the reader will do well to consult the 22d *catechetical discourse* of Cyril of Jerusalem, and the *apostolical constitutions*, which are falsely attributed to Clement of Rome. These writers are most learnedly illustrated and explained by Peter le Brun, in his *Explication littérale et historique de la Messe*, tom. ii. p. 53.

to rule and instruct, formed such a plan of divine worship as he thought the wisest and the best. Hence that variety of *liturgies* which were in use, before the bishop of Rome had usurped the supreme power in religious matters, and persuaded the credulous and unthinking, that the model, both of doctrine and worship, was to be given by the mother church, and to be followed implicitly throughout the Christian world.

iv. It would be almost endless to enter into a minute detail of all the different parts of public worship, and to point out the disadvantageous changes they underwent. A few observations will be sufficient upon this head. The public prayers had now lost much of that solemn and majestic simplicity, that characterized them in the primitive times, and which were, at present, degenerating into a vain and swelling bombast. The psalms of David were now received among the public hymns that were sung as a part of divine service.^t The sermons, or public discourses addressed to the people, were composed according to the rules of human eloquence, and rather adapted to excite the stupid admiration of the populace, who delight in vain embellishments, than to enlighten the understanding, or to reform the heart. Nay, it would seem as if all possible means had been industriously used, to give an air of folly and extravagance to the Christian assemblies. For the people were permitted, nay, even exhorted by the preacher himself, to crown his talents with clapping of hands and loud acclamations of applause;^u a recompense that was hitherto peculiar to the actors on the theatre, and the orators in the forum. How men, set apart by their profession to exhibit examples of the contempt of vainglory, and to demonstrate to others the vanity and emptiness of all temporal things, could indulge such a senseless and indecent ambition, is difficult to be conceived, though it is highly to be deplored.

v. The first day of the week, which was the ordinary and stated time for the public assemblies of Christians, was, in consequence of a peculiar law enacted by Constantine, observed with more solemnity

^t Changes introduced into many parts of divine worship.

^t Beausobre, *Hist. de Manichéisme*, tom. ii. p. 614.

^u Franc. Bernh. Ferrarius, *De veterum acclamationibus et plausu*, p. 66.

than it had formerly been.^w The festivals celebrated in most of the Christian churches, were five in number, and were appointed in commemoration of the birth, the sufferings and death, the resurrection and the ascension of the divine Saviour; and also of the effusion of the Holy Ghost upon the apostles and first heralds of the gospel on the day of pentecost. Of these festivals, none were kept with so much solemnity and respect, as the fourteen days that were appointed for the commemoration of Christ's resurrection.^x

The eastern Christians celebrated the memory of Christ's birth and baptism in one festival, which was fixed on the sixth of January, and this day was by them called the Epiphany, as on it the immortal Saviour was manifested to the world.^y On the other hand, the Christians of the west seem to have always celebrated the birth of our Lord on the twenty-fifth of December; for there appears to be very little certainty in the accounts of those, who allege that the Roman pontiff, Julius I. removed the festival of Christ's birth from the sixth of January to the twenty-fifth of December.^z

The unlucky success which some had in discovering the carcasses and remains of certain holy men, multiplied the *festivals and commemorations of the martyrs* in the most extravagant manner. The increase of these festivals would not have been offensive to the wise and the good, if Christians had employed the time they took up, in promoting their spiritual interests, and in forming habits of sanctity and virtue. But the contrary happened; these days, which were set apart for pious exercises; were squandered away in indolence, voluptuousness, and criminal pursuits, and were less consecrated to the service of God, than employed in the indulgence of sinful passions. It is well known, among other things, what opportunities of sinning were offered to the licentious, by what were called the vigils of Easter, and Whitsuntide, or Pentecost.

VI. *Fasting* was considered, in this century, as the most effectual and powerful means of repelling the force, and disconcerting the stratagems of evil spirits, and

Fasting.

^w Jac. Godofred *ad codicem Theodos.* tom. i. p. 135.

^x *Ibid.* tom. i. p. 143.

^y Beausobre, *Hist. du Mgnichisme*, tom. ii. p. 693.

^z See Jos. Sim. Asseman. *Biblioth. Orient. Clement.* Vatican. tom. ii. p. 168. Alphonse Vignoles, *Diss. dans la Bibliothèque Germanique*, tom. ii. p. 22.

of appeasing the anger of an offended Deity. Hence we may easily understand what induced the rulers of the church to establish this custom by express laws, and to impose, as an indispensable duty, an act of humiliation; the observation of which had hitherto been left to every one's choice. The *quadragesimal*, or *lent fast*, was held more sacred than all the rest, though it was not as yet confined to a fixed number of days.^a We must however remark, that the *fasts* observed in this century, were very different from those that were solemnized in the preceding times. Formerly those who submitted themselves to the discipline of fasting abstained wholly from meat and drink; but now a mere abstinence from flesh and wine was, by many, judged sufficient for the purposes of fasting,^b and this latter opinion prevailed, from this time, and became universal among the Latins.

VII. *Baptismal* fonts were now erected in the porch of each church, for the more commodious administration of that initiating sacrament. *Baptism* was administered during the vigils of Easter and Whitsuntide, with lighted tapers, by the bishop, and the presbyters commissioned by him for that purpose. In cases however of urgent necessity, and in such only, a dispensation was granted for performing this sacred rite, at other times than those now mentioned. In some places *salt* was employed, as a symbol of purity and wisdom, and was thrown, with this view, into the mouth of the person baptized; and a *double unction* was every where used in the celebration of this ordinance, one preceding its administration, and the other following it. The persons who were admitted into the church by baptism were obliged, after the celebration of that holy ordinance, to go clothed in white garments during the space of seven days.

Many other rites and ceremonies might be mentioned here; but, as they neither acquired stability by their duration, nor received the sanction of universal approbation and consent, we shall pass them over in silence.

VIII. The institution of *catechumens*, and the discipline through which they passed, suffered no variation in this century, but continued still upon its ancient footing. It appears farther, by innumerable testimonies,

and of the
Lord's supper.

^a Jo. Dallæus, *De Jejuniis et Quadragesima*, lib. iv.

^b See Barbeyrac. *De la Morale des Peres*, p. 250.

that the Lord's supper was administered, in some places two or three times a week, in others on Sunday only, to all those who were assembled together to worship God. It was also sometimes celebrated at the tombs of martyrs and at funerals, which custom, undoubtedly, gave rise to the *masses*, that were afterward performed in honour of the saints, and for the benefit of the dead. In many places the bread and wine were held up to view before their distribution, that they might be seen by the people, and contemplated with a certain religious respect; and hence, not long after the *adoration of the symbols* was unquestionably derived. Neither *catechumens*, *penitents*, nor those who were supposed to be under the influence and impulse of evil spirits, were admitted to this holy ordinance; nor did the sacred orators in their public discourses ever dare to unfold its true and genuine nature with freedom and simplicity. The reason of thus concealing it from the knowledge and observation of many, was a very mean and shameful one, as we have already observed; many indeed, offer a much more decent and satisfactory argument in favour of this custom, when they allege, that by these *mysterious* proceedings, the desire of the *catechumens* would naturally burn to penetrate, as soon as was possible, the sublime secret, and that they would thereby be animated to prepare themselves with double diligence for receiving this privilege.

CHAPTER V.

CONCERNING THE DIVISIONS AND HERESIES THAT TROUBLED THE CHURCH DURING THIS CENTURY.

I. THE sects which had sprung up in the preceding ages, transmitted their contagious principles to this century. Many of them remained yet, particularly in the east, and notwithstanding their absurdity, continued to attract a certain number of followers. The Manichean faction surpassed the rest in its influence and progress. The very turpitude and enormity of its doctrines seemed to seduce many into its snares; and, what is still more surprising, men of genius and penetration were deluded by its enchantments, as the example of Augustin sufficiently testifies. It is true, the wisest and most learned writers of the times, and among others Augustin, when he

The remains
of the ancient
sects.

returned from his errors, endeavoured to oppose the growth of this spreading pestilence ; nor were their efforts entirely unsuccessful. But the root of this horrible disease was deep ; and neither the force of argument, nor the severity of the most rigorous laws were sufficient to extirpate it thoroughly.^c For some time indeed it seemed to disappear, and many thought it utterly eradicated ; but it gathered force secretly, and broke out afterward with new violence. To avoid the severity of the laws, the Manicheans concealed themselves under a variety of names, which they adopted successively, and changed in proportion as they were discovered under them. Thus they assumed the names of encratites, apotactics, saccophori, hydroparastates, solitaries, and several others, under which they lay concealed for a certain time, but could not however long escape the vigilance of their enemies.^d

II. The state had little danger to apprehend from a sect which the force of severe laws and of penal restraints could not fail to undermine gradually, throughout the Roman empire. But a new and much more formidable faction started up in Africa, which though it arose from small beginnings, afflicted most grievously both church and state for more than a century. Its origin was as follows.

The rise of
the contro-
versy with the
Donatists.

Mensurius, bishop of Carthage in Africa, dying in the year 311, the greatest part of the clergy and people chose, in his place, the archdeacon Cæcilianus, who, without waiting for the assembly of the Numidian bishops, was consecrated by those of Africa alone. This hasty proceeding was the occasion of much trouble. The Numidian bishops, who had always been present at the consecration of the bishops of Carthage, were highly offended at their being excluded from this solemn ceremony, and assembling themselves at Carthage, called Cæcilianus before them, to give an account of his conduct. The flame thus kindled, was greatly augmented by certain Cathaginian presbyters, who were competitors with Cæcilianus, particularly Botrus and Celesius. Lucilla also, an opulent lady, who had been

^c The severe laws enacted by the emperors against the Manicheans are to be found in the *Theodosian Code*, vol. vi. part i. edit. Ritterian. In the year 372, Valentinian the elder prohibited their assemblies, and imposed heavy penalties on their doctors, p. 126. In 381, Theodosius the Great branded them with infamy, and deprived them of all the rights and privileges of citizens, p. 133. Add to these many edicts yet more dreadful, which may be seen in pages 137, 138, 170, of the above-mentioned work.

^d See the law of Theodosius, *Codex Theod.* tom. vi. p. 134, 136, 137, 138.

reprimanded by Cæcilianus for her superstitious practices, and had conceived against him a bitter enmity on that account, was active in exasperating the spirits of his adversaries, and distributed a large sum of money among the Numidians to encourage them in their opposition to the new bishop. In consequence of all this, Cæcilianus, Cæcilianus condemned. refusing to submit to the judgment of the Numidians, was condemned in a council, assembled by Secundus, bishop of Tigisis, consisting of seventy prelates, who, with the consent of a considerable part of the clergy and people, declared him unworthy of the episcopal dignity, and chose his deacon Majorinus for his successor. By this proceeding, the Carthaginian church was divided into two factions, and groaned under the contests of two rival bishops, Cæcilianus and Majorinus.

III. The Numidians alleged two important reasons to justify their sentence against Cæcilianus; as *first*, The reasons alleged for his condemnation. that Felix of Aptungus, the chief of the bishops, who assisted at his consecration, was a *traditor*, i. e. one of those who, during the persecution under Dioclesian, had delivered the sacred writings and the pious books of the Christians to the magistrates in order to be burnt; and that having thus apostatized from the service of Christ, it was not possible that he could impart the Holy Ghost to the new bishop. A *second* reason for their sentence against Cæcilianus was drawn from the harshness and even cruelty that he had discovered in his conduct, while he was a deacon, toward the Christian confessors and martyrs during the persecution above mentioned, whom he abandoned, in the most merciless manner, to all the extremities of hunger and want, leaving them without food in their prisons, and hindering those who were willing to succour them, from bringing them relief. To these accusations they added the insolent contumacy of the new prelate, who refused to obey their summons, and to appear before them in council to justify his conduct.

There were none of the Numidians who opposed Cæcilianus with such bitterness and vehemence, as Donatus, bishop of Casæ nigræ, and hence the whole faction was called after him, as most writers think; though some are of opinion, that they derived this name from another Donatus, whom the Donatists surnamed the Great.^e This

^e In the faction of the Donatists, there were two eminent persons of the name of Donatus: the one was a Numidian, and bishop of Casæ nigræ; the other succeeded

controversy, in a short time, spread far and wide, not only throughout Numidia, but even through all the provinces of Africa, which entered so zealously into this ecclesiastical war, that in most cities there were two bishops, one at the head of Cæcilianus's party, and the other acknowledged by the followers of Majorinus.

IV. The Donatists having brought this controversy before Constantine the Great, that emperor in the year 313, appointed Melchiades, bishop of Rome, to examine the matter, and named three bishops of Gaul to assist him in this inquiry. The result of this examination was favourable to Cæcilianus, who was entirely acquitted of the crimes laid to his charge; but the accusations that had been brought against Felix of Aptungus, by whom he was consecrated, were left out of the question. Hence it was, that the emperor, in the year 314, ordered the cause of Felix to be examined separately by Ælian, proconsul of Africa, by whose decision he was absolved. The Donatists, whose cause suffered necessarily by these proceedings, complained much of the judgment pronounced by Melchiades and Ælian. The small number of bishops, that had been appointed to examine their cause jointly with Melchiades, excited, in a particular manner, their reproaches, and even their contempt. They looked upon the decision of seventy venerable Numidian prelates, as infinitely more respectable than that pronounced by nineteen bishops, for such was the number assembled at Rome, who, beside the inferiority of their number, were not sufficiently acquainted with the African affairs to be competent judges in the present question. The indulgent emperor, willing to remove these specious complaints, ordered a second and a much more numerous assembly to meet at Arles in the year 314, composed of bishops from various provinces, from Italy, Gaul, Germany, and Spain. Here again the Donatists lost their cause, but renewed their efforts by appealing to the imme-

Majorinus, bishop of Carthage, as leader of the Donatists, and received from his sect, on account of his learning and virtue, the title of Donatus the Great. Hence it has been a question among the learned, from which of these the sect derived its name. The arguments that support the different sides of this trivial question are nearly of equal force; and why may we not decide it by supposing that the Donatists were so called from them both?

¶ The emperor, in his letter to Melchiades, named no more than three prelates, viz. Maternus, Rheticius, and Marinus, bishops of Cologne, Autun, and Arles, to sit with him as judges of this controversy; but afterward he ordered seven more to be added to the number, and as many as could soon and conveniently assemble; so that they were at last nineteen in all.

diate judgment of the emperor, who condescended so far, as to admit their appeal; and in consequence thereof, examined the whole affair himself in the year 316 at Milan, in presence of the contending parties. The issue of this third trial was not more favourable to the Donatists than that of the two preceding councils, whose decisions the emperor confirmed by the sentence he pronounced.^g Hence this perverse sect loaded Constantine with the bitterest reproaches, and maliciously complained that Osius, bishop of Cordoua, who was honoured with his friendship, and was intimately connected with Cæcilianus, had, by corrupt insinuations, engaged him to pronounce an unrighteous sentence. The emperor, animated with a just indignation at such odious proceedings, deprived the Donatists of their churches in Africa, and sent into banishment their seditious bishops. Nay, he carried his resentment so far as to put some of them to death, probably on account of the intolerable petulance and malignity they discovered both in their writings and in their discourse. Hence arose violent commotions and tumults in Africa, as the sect of the Donatists was extremely powerful and numerous there. The emperor endeavoured, by embassies and negotiations, to allay these disturbances, but his efforts were without effect.

v. These unhappy commotions gave rise, no doubt, to a horrible confederacy of desperate ruffians, who passed under the name of circumcellions. This furious, fearless, and bloody set of men, composed of the rough and savage populace, who embraced the party of the Donatists, maintained their cause by the force of arms, and, overrunning all Africa, filled that province with slaughter and rapine, and committed the most enormous acts of perfidy and cruelty against the followers of Cæcilianus. This outrageous multitude, whom no prospect of sufferings could terrify, and who, upon urgent occasions, faced death itself with the most audacious temerity, contributed to render the sect of the Donatists and object of the utmost abhorrence; though it cannot be made to appear from any records of undoubted authority, that the bishops

The origin of the circumcelliones.

^g The proofs of the supreme power of the emperors, in religious matters, appear so incontestable in this controversy, that it is amazing it should ever have been called in question. Certain it is, that at this time, the notion of a supreme judge set over the church universal, by the appointment of Christ, never had entered into any one's head. The assemblies of the clergy at Rome and Arles are commonly called *councils*; but improperly, since, in reality, they were nothing more than meetings of judges, or *commissaries* appointed by the emperor.

of that faction, those at least, who had any reputation for piety and virtue, either approved the proceedings, or stirred up the violence of this odious rabble. In the mean time, the flame of discord gathered strength daily, and seemed to portend the approaching horrors of a civil war; to prevent which, Constantine, having tried in vain, every other method of accommodation, abolished at last, by the advice of the governors of Africa, the laws that had been enacted against the Donatists, and allowed the people a full liberty of adhering to the party they liked the best.

VI. After the death of Constantine the Great, his son <sup>They are de-
feated</sup> Constans, to whom Africa was allotted in the division of the empire, sent Macarius and Paulus into that province, with a view to heal this deplorable schism, and, to engage the Donatists to conclude a peace. Donatus, surnamed the Great, the principal bishop of that sect, opposed all methods of reconciliation with the utmost vehemence, and his example was followed by the other prelates of the party. The Circumcelliones also continued to support the cause of the Donatists by assassinations and massacres, executed with the most unrelenting fury. They were, however, stopped in their career, and were defeated by Macarius at the battle of Bagnia. Upon this, the affairs of the Donatists declined apace; and Macarius used no longer the soft voice of persuasion to engage them to an accommodation, but employed his authority for that purpose. A few submitted; the greatest part saved themselves by flight; numbers were sent into banishment, among whom was Donatus the Great; and many of them were punished with the utmost severity. During these troubles, which continued near thirteen years, several steps were taken against the Donatists, which the equitable and impartial will be at a loss to reconcile with the dictates of humanity and justice; nor indeed do the catholics themselves deny the truth of this assertion.^b And hence the complaints which the Donatists made of the cruelty of their adversaries.ⁱ

^b The testimony of Optatus of Milevi is beyond exception in this matter; it is quoted from the third book of his treatise, *De Schismate Donatistarum*, § i. and runs thus; "Ab Operariis Unitatis, i. e. the emperor's ambassadors Macarius and Paulus, multa quidem asperè gesta sunt. Fugerunt omnes Episcopi cum clericis suis, aliqui sunt mortui; qui fortiores fuerunt, capti et longe relegati sunt." Optatus, through the whole of this work, endeavours to excuse the severities committed against the Donatists, of which he lays the principal fault upon that sect itself, confessing, however, that in some instances, the proceedings against them were too rigorous to deserve approbation, or admit of an excuse.

ⁱ See *Collet. Carthag. diplomat.* § 259, at the end of Optatus, p. 315.

VII. The emperor Julian, upon his accession to the throne in the year 362, permitted the exiled Donatists to return to their country, and restored them to the enjoyment of their former liberty. This step renewed the vigour of that expiring sect, who, on their return from banishment, brought over in a short time the greatest part of the province of Africa to espouse their interest. Gratian indeed published several edicts against them, and in the year 377, deprived them of their churches, and prohibited all their assemblies, public and private. But the fury of the circumcelliones, who may be considered as the soldiery of the Donatists, and the apprehension of intestine tumults, prevented, no doubt, the vigorous execution of these laws. This appears from the number of churches which this people had in Africa toward the conclusion of this century, and which were served by no less than four hundred bishops. Two things, however, diminished considerably the power and lustre of this flourishing sect, and made it decline apace about the end of this century; the one was a violent division that arose among them, on account of a person named Maximin; and this division, so proper to weaken the common cause, was the most effectual instrument the catholics could use to combat the Donatists. But a second circumstance which precipitated their decline, was the zealous and fervent opposition of Augustin, first presbyter, and afterward bishop of Hippo. This learned and ingenious prelate attacked the Donatists in every way. In his writings, in his public discourses, and in his private conversation, he exposed the dangerous and seditious principles of this sect in the strongest manner; and as he was of a warm and active spirit, he animated against them not only the province of Africa, but also the whole Christian world, and the imperial court.

The state of the Donatists, under the emperors Julian and Gratian.

VIII. The doctrine of the Donatists was conformable to that of the church, as even their adversaries confess; nor were their lives less exemplary than those of other Christian societies, if we except the enormous conduct of the circumcelliones, which the greatest part of the sect regarded with the utmost detestation and abhorrence. The crime, therefore, of the Donatists lay properly in the following things; in their declaring the church of Africa, which adhered to Cæcilianus fallen from the dignity and privileges of a true church, and deprived

The principle crime of the Donatists.

of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, on account of the offences with which the new bishop and Felix of Aptungus, who had consecrated him, were charged; in their pronouncing all the churches, who held communion with that of Africa, corrupt and polluted; in maintaining that the sanctity of their bishops gave their community alone a full right to be considered as the true, the pure, and holy church; and in their avoiding all communication with other churches, from an apprehension of contracting their impurity and corruption. This erroneous principle was the source of that most shocking uncharitableness and presumption that appeared in their conduct to other churches. Hence they pronounced the sacred rites and institutions void of all virtue and efficacy among those Christians who were not precisely of their sentiments, and not only rebaptized those who came over to their party from other churches, but even with respect to those who had been ordained ministers of the Gospel, they observed the severe custom either of depriving them of their office, or obliging them to be ordained a second time. This schismatic pestilence was almost wholly confined to Africa; for the few pitiful assemblies, which the Donatists had formed in Spain and Italy, had neither stability nor duration.^k

ix. The faction of the Donatists was not the only one that troubled the church during this century. Soon after its commencement, even in the year 317, a new contention arose in Egypt, upon a subject of much higher importance, and with consequences of a yet more pernicious nature. The subject of this fatal controversy, which kindled such deplorable divisions throughout the Christian world, was the doctrine of *three persons in the godhead*; a doctrine which, in the three preceding centuries, had happily escaped the vain curiosity of human researches, and been left undefined and undetermined by any particular set of ideas. The church indeed had frequently decided against the Sabellians and others, that there was a real difference between the *Father* and the *Son*, and that

The doctrine of this century concerning the trinity.

^k A more ample account of the Donatists will be found in the following writers; Henr. Valesius, *Dissert. de Schismate Donatistarum*. This dissertation Valesius subjoined to his edition of the Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius. Thom. Ittigius's *History of Donatism*, which is published in the appendix to his book concerning the *heresies of the apostolic age*. Herm. Witsius, *Miscellan. Sacror.* tom. i. lib. iv. p. 742. Henr. Noris, *Hist. Donatian.* augmented by the Ballerini opp. tom. iv. p. xlv. Long's *History of the Donatists*, London 1677, 8vo. These are the sources from whence we have drawn the accounts that we have given of this troublesome sect.

the *Holy Ghost* was distinct from them both; or, as we commonly speak, that three distinct persons exist in the Deity; but the mutual relation of these persons to each other, and the nature of that distinction that subsists between them, are matters that hitherto were neither disputed nor explained, and with respect to which the church had, consequently, observed a profound silence. Nothing was dictated to the faith of Christians in this matter; nor were there any modes of expression prescribed as requisite to be used in speaking of this mystery. Hence it happened, that the Christian doctors entertained different sentiments upon this subject without giving the least offence, and discoursed variously, concerning the distinctions between *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*; each one following his respective opinion with the utmost liberty. In Egypt, and the adjacent countries, the greatest part embraced in this, as well as in other matters, the opinion of Origen, who held that the *Son* was *in God*, that which *reason* is *in man*; and that the *Holy Ghost* was nothing more than the *divine energy*, or active force. This notion is attended with many difficulties; and if it is not proposed with the utmost caution, tends, in a particular manner, to remove all real distinction between the persons in the godhead, or, in other words, leads directly to Sabellianism.

x. In an assembly of the presbyters of Alexandria, the bishop of that city, whose name was Alexander, expressed his sentiments on this head with a high degree of freedom and confidence; and maintained among other things, that the Son was not only of the same eminence and dignity, but also of the same essence with the Father.¹ This assertion was opposed by Arius, one of the presbyters, a man of a subtle turn, and remarkable for his eloquence. Whether his zeal for his own opinions, or personal resentment against his bishop was the motive that influenced him, is not very certain. Be that as it will, he first treated as false, the assertion of Alexander, on account of its affinity to the Sabellian errors, which had been condemned by the church; and then, running himself into the opposite extreme, he maintained that the *Son* was totally and essentially distinct from the *Father*; that he was the *first* and *noblest* of those beings, whom God the *Father* had

The rise of
Arianism.

¹ See Socrates, *Hist. Eccles.* lib. i. cap. v. Theodoret. *Hist. Eccles.* lib. i. cap. ii.

created out of nothing, the instrument by whose subordinate operation the almighty Father formed the universe, and therefore inferior to the Father both in *nature* and in *dignity*. His opinions concerning the *Holy Ghost* are not so well known. It is however certain that his notion concerning the *Son of God* was accompanied and connected with other sentiments, that were very different from those commonly received among Christians, though none of the ancient writers have given us a complete and coherent system of those religious tenets which were really held by Arius and his followers.^m

XI. The opinions of Arius were no sooner divulged, than they found in Egypt, and the neighbouring provinces, a multitude of abettors, and among these many who were distinguished as much by the superiority of their learning and genius, as by the eminence of their rank and station in the world. Alexander, on the other hand, in two councils assembled at Alexandria, accused Arius of impiety, and caused him to be expelled from the communion of the church. Arius received this severe and ignominious shock with great firmness and constancy of mind; retired into Palestine; wrote from thence several letters to the most eminent men of those times, in which he endeavoured to demonstrate the truth of his opinions, and that with such surprising success, that vast numbers were drawn over to his party; and among these Eusebius, bishop of Nicomedia, a man distinguished in the church by his influence and authority. The emperor Constantine, looking upon the subject of this controversy as a matter of small importance, and as little connected with the fundamental and essential doctrines of religion, contented himself at first with addressing a letter to the contending parties, in which he admonished them to put an end to

^m For an account of the Arian controversy, the curious reader must consult the *Life of Constantine*, by Eusebius; the various libels of Athanasius, which are to be found in the first volume of his works; the *Ecclesiastical Histories* of Socrates, Sozomen, and Theodoret, the 69th *Heresy* of Epiphanius, and other writers of this and the following age. But among all these, there is none to whom the merit of impartiality can be attributed with justice; so that the Arian history stands yet in need of a pen guided by integrity and candour, and unbiassed by affection or hatred. Both sides have deserved reproach upon this head; and those who have hitherto written the history of the Arian controversy, have only espied the faults of one side; e. g. it is a common opinion, that Arius was too much attached to the opinions of Plato and Origen, see *Petav. Dogm. Theol.* tom. ii. lib. i. cap. viii. but this common opinion is a vulgar error. Origen and Plato entertained notions entirely different from those of Arius; whereas Alexander, his antagonist, undoubtedly followed the manner of Origen, in explaining the doctrine of the three persons. See Cudworth's *Intellectual System of the Universe*.

their disputes. But when the prince saw that his admonitions were without effect, and that the troubles and commotions, which the passions of men too often mingle with religious disputes, were spreading and increasing daily throughout the empire, he assembled, at length, in the year 325, the famous council of Nice in Bithynia, wherein the deputies of the church universal were summoned to put an end to this controversy. In this general council, after many keen debates and violent efforts of the two parties, the doctrine of Arius was condemned; Christ declared *consubstantial*,ⁿ or of the same essence with the Father; the vanquished presbyter banished among the Illyrians, and his followers compelled to give their assent to the creed,^o or confession of faith, which was composed by this council.

xii. The council assembled by Constantine at Nice, is one of the most famous and interesting events that are presented to us in ecclesiastical history; and yet ^{The council of Nice.} what is most surprising, there is no part of the history of the church that has been unfolded with such negligence, or rather passed over with such rapidity.^p The ancient writers are neither agreed concerning the time nor place in which it was assembled, the number of those who sat in council, nor the bishop who presided in it. No authentic acts of its famous sentence have been committed to writing, or at least, none have been transmitted to our times.^q

The eastern Christians differ from all others both concerning the number and the nature of the laws that were enacted in this celebrated council. The latter mention only twenty *canons*; but in the estimate of the former, they amount to a much greater number.^r It appears however by those laws, which all parties have admitted as genuine, and also from other authentic records, not

n ὁμοουσιος.

o John Christ. Suicer has illustrated this famous creed from several important and ancient records, in a very learned book published in 4to. at Utrecht, in the year 1718.

p See Ittigii *Historia Concilii Nicani*, which was published after his death. Le Clerc, *Bibliothèque Histor. et Universelle*, tom. x. p. 421, tom. xxii. p. 291. Beausobre *Histoire de Manichee, et de Manicheisme*, tom. i. p. 520. The accounts which the Oriental writers have given of this council, have been collected by Euseb. Renaudot, in his *History of the patriarchs of Alexandria*, p. 69.

q See the *Annotations of Valesius upon the Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius*, p. 223. Jos. Sim. Asseman. *Bibl. Oriental. Clement. Vatican.*, tom. i. p. 195. The history of this council was written by Maruthas, a Syrian, but is long since lost.

r Th. Ittigius, *Supplem. opp. Clement. Alex.* p. 191. Jos. Sim. Asseman. *Biblioth. Orient. Clement. Vatic.* tom. i. p. 22, 195. Euseb. Renaudot, *Histor. Patriarch. Alexandrinor.* p. 71.

only that Arius was condemned in this council, but that some other points were determined, and certain measures agreed upon, to calm the religious tumults that had so long troubled the church. The controversy concerning the time of celebrating Easter was terminated;^s the troubles which Novatian had excited by opposing the remission of the *lapsed* to the communion of the church, were composed; the Meletian schism was condemned;^t the jurisdiction of the greater bishops precisely defined and determined;^u with several other matters of a like nature. But while these good prelates were employing all their zeal and attention to correct the mistakes and errors of others, they were upon the point of falling into a very capital one themselves. For they had almost come to a resolution of imposing upon the clergy the yoke of perpetual celibacy, when Paphnutius put a stop to their proceedings, and warded off that unnatural law.^w

XIII. But notwithstanding all these determinations, the commotions excited by this controversy remained yet in the minds of many, and the spirit of dissension and controversy triumphed both over the decrees of the council and the authority of the emperor. For those who, in the main, were far from being attached to the party of Arius, found many things reprehensible both in the decrees of the council, and in the forms of expression which it employed to explain the controverted

The history
of Arianism
after the coun-
cil of Nice.

^s The decision, with respect to Easter, was in favour of the custom of the western churches; and accordingly all churches were ordered to celebrate that festival on the Sunday which immediately followed the 14th of the first moon that happened after the vernal equinox.

^t Meletius, bishop of Lycopolis in Egypt, was accused and convicted of having offered *incense* to *idols*; and in consequence thereof, was deposed by Peter, bishop of Alexandria, whose jurisdiction extended throughout all Egypt. Meletius, upon this, became the head of a schism in the church, by assuming to himself the power of ordination, which was vested in the bishop of Alexandria; and exercised by him in all the Egyptian churches. Epiphanius attributes the dissensions between Meletius and Peter to another cause, *Her.* 68; he alleges, that the vigorous proceedings of Peter against Meletius were occasioned by the latter's refusing to readmit into the church those who had fallen from the faith during Diocletian's persecution, before their penitential trial was entirely finished. The former opinion is maintained by Socrates and Theodoret, whose authority is certainly more respectable than that of Epiphanius.

^u The confusion that Meletius introduced, by presuming, as was observed in the preceding note, to violate the jurisdiction of Peter, the metropolitan of Alexandria, by conferring *ordination* in a province where he alone had a right to ordain, was rectified by the council of Nice, which determined, that the metropolitan bishops, in their respective provinces, should have the same power and authority that the bishops of Rome exercised over the suburbicarian churches and countries.

^w Socrates, *Hist. Eccles.* lib. i. cap. viii. compared with Franc. Balduinus, in *Constant. Magn.* and George Calixtus. *De conjugio clericorum*, p. 170.


points ; while the Arians, on the other hand, left no means untried to heal their wound, and to recover their place and their credit in the church. And their efforts were crowned with the desired success. For a few years after the council of Nice, a certain Arian priest, who had been recommended to the emperor, in the dying words of his sister Constantia, found means to persuade Constantine the Great, that the condemnation of Arius was utterly unjust, and was rather owing to the malice of his enemies, than to their zeal for the truth. In consequence of this, the emperor recalled him from banishment in the year 330,* repealed the laws that had been enacted against him, and permitted his chief protector, Eusebius of Nicomedia, and his vindictive faction, to vex and oppress the partisans of the Nicene council, in various ways. Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria, was one of those who suffered most from the violent measures of the Arian party. Invincibly firm in his purpose, and deaf to the most powerful solicitations and entreaties, he obstinately refused to restore Arius to his former rank and office. On this account he was deposed, by the council held at Tyre, in the year 335, and was afterward banished into Gaul, while Arius and his followers were, with great solemnity, reinstated in their privileges, and received into the communion of the church. The people of Alexandria, unmoved by these proceedings in favour of Arius, persisted to refuse him a place among their presbyters ; upon which the emperor invited him to Constantinople in the year 336, and ordered Alexander, the bishop of that city, to admit him to his communion. But before this order could be put in execution, Arius died at Constantinople

✠ x The precise time in which Arius was recalled from banishment, has not been fixed with such perfect certainty as to prevent a diversity of sentiments on that head. The *annotations* of the learned Valesius, or Valois, upon Sozomen's *History*, p. 10 and 11, will cast some light upon this matter, and make it probable, that Dr. Mosheim has placed the recall of Arius too late, at least by two years. Valesius has proved, from the authority of Philostorgius, and from other most respectable monuments and records, that Eusebius of Nicomedia, and Theognis, who were banished by the emperor about three months after the council of Nice, i. e. in the year 325, were recalled in the year 328. Now, in the *writing* by which they obtained their return, they pleaded the restoration of Arius as an argument for theirs, which proves that he was recalled before the year 330. The same Valesius proves that Arius the first head of the Arian sect, was dead before the council of Tyre, which was transferred to Jerusalem ; and that the letters which Constantine addressed to that council in favour of Arius and his followers, were in behalf of a second chief of that name, who put himself at the head of the Arians, and who, in conjunction with Euzoius, presented to Constantine such a confession of their faith, as made him imagine their doctrine to be orthodox, and procured their reconciliation with the church at the council of Jerusalem. See *Annot. Vales. ad Hist. Socrat. lib. i. cap. xxxiii. p. 46.*

in a very dismal manner,^y and the emperor Constantine survived him but a short time.

XIV. After the death of Constantine the Great, one of his sons, Constantius, who, in the division of the empire, became ruler of the east, was warmly attached to the Arian party, whose principles were also zealously adopted by the empress, and indeed by the whole court. On the other hand, Constantine and Constans, emperors of the west, maintained the decrees of the council of Nice throughout all the provinces where their jurisdiction extended. Hence arose endless animosities and seditions, treacherous plots, and open acts of injustice and violence between the two contending parties. Council was assembled against council, and their jarring and contradictory decrees spread perplexity and confusion throughout the Christian world.

In the year 350, Constans was assassinated; and about two years after this, a great part of the western empire, particularly Rome and Italy, fell into the hands of his brother Constantius. This change was extremely unfavourable to those who adhered to the decrees of the council of Nice. The emperor's attachment to the Arians animated him against their adversaries, whom he involved in various troubles and calamities, and obliged many of them, by threats and punishment, to come over to the sect which he esteemed and protected. Among these forced proselytes was Liberius the Roman pontiff, who was compelled to embrace Arianism in the year 357. The Nicene party meditated reprisals, and waited only a convenient time, a fit place, and a proper occasion, for executing their resentment. Thus the history of the church, under the emperor Constantius, presents to the reader a perpetual scene of tumult and violence, and the deplorable spectacle

 y The dismal manner in which Arius is said to have expired, by his entrails falling out as he was discharging one of the natural functions, is a fact that has been called in question by some modern writers, though without foundation, since it is confirmed by the unexceptionable testimonies of Socrates, Sozomen, Athanasius, and others. The causes of this tragical death have furnished much matter of dispute. The ancient writers, who considered this event as a judgment of Heaven, miraculously drawn down, by the prayers of the just, to punish the impiety of Arius, will find little credit in our times, among such as have studied with attention and impartiality the history of Arianism. After having considered this matter with the utmost care, it appears to me extremely probable, that this unhappy man was a victim to the resentment of his enemies, and was destroyed by poison, or some such violent method. A blind and fanatical zeal for certain systems of faith has, in all ages, produced such horrible acts of cruelty and injustice.

of a war carried on between brothers, without religion, justice, or humanity.

xv. The death of Constantius, in the year 362, changed considerably the face of religious affairs, and diminished greatly the strength and influence of the Arian party. Julian, who, by his principles, was naturally prevented from taking a part in the controversy, bestowed his protection on neither side, but treated them both with an impartiality which was the result of a perfect indifference. Jovian, his successor, declared himself in favour of the Nicene doctrine; and immediately the whole west, with a considerable part of the eastern provinces, changed sides, conformed to the decrees of the council of Nice, and abjured the Arian system.

Under Julian and Jovian.

The scene however changed again in the year 364, when Valentinian, and his brother Valens, were raised to the empire. Valentinian adhered to the decrees of the Nicene council; and hence the whole Arian sect, a few churches excepted, was destroyed and extirpated in the west. Valens, on the other hand, favoured the Arians; and his zeal for their cause exposed their adversaries, the Nicenians, in the eastern provinces, to many severe trials and sufferings. These troubles, however, ended with the reign of this emperor, who fell in a battle which was fought against the Goths in the year 378, and was succeeded by Gratian, a friend to the Nicenians, and the restorer of their tranquillity. His zeal for their interests, though fervent and active, was surpassed by that of his successor, Theodosius the Great, who raised the secular arm against the Arians, with a terrible degree of violence, drove them from their churches, enacted laws, whose severity exposed them to the greatest calamities,^z and rendered, throughout his dominions, the decrees of the council of Nice triumphant over all opposition; so that the public profession of the Arian doctrine was confirmed to the barbarous and unconquered nations, such as the Burgundians, Goths, and Vandals.

Under Valentinian and Valens.

During this long and violent contest between the Nicenians and Arians, the attentive and impartial will acknowledge, that unjustifiable measures were taken, and

^z See *Codex Theodosianus*, tom. vi. p. 5, 10. 130, 146; as also Godofred's annotations thereupon.

great excesses committed on both sides. So that when abstracting from the merits of the cause, we only consider with what temper, and by what means, the parties defended their respective opinions, it will be difficult to determine which of the two exceeded most the bounds of probity, charity, and moderation.

XVI. The efforts of the Arians to maintain their cause, Various sects of Arians. would have been much more prejudicial to the church than they were in effect, had not the members of that sect been divided among themselves, and torn into factions, which regarded each other with the bitterest aversion. Of these, the ancient writers make mention under the names of Semiarians, Eusebians, Aetians, Eunomians, Acasians, Psathyrians, and others; but they may all be ranked, with the utmost propriety, into three classes. The first of these were the primitive and genuine Arians, who rejecting all those forms and modes of expression which the moderns have invented to render their opinions less shocking to the Nicenians, taught simply, “that the Son *was not begotten of the Father*, i. e. produced out of his substance, *but only created out of nothing*.” This class was opposed by the Semiarians, who, in their turn, were abandoned by the Eunomians or Anomæans, the disciples of Ætius and Eunomius, of whom the latter was eminent for his knowledge and penetration. The Semiarians held, *that the Son was* *ὁμοιούσιος*, i. e. *similar to the Father in his essence, not by nature, but by a peculiar privilege*; and the leading men of this party were, George of Laodicea, and Basilius of Ancyra.^a The Eunomians, who were also called Aetians and Exucontians, and may be counted in the number of pure Arians, maintained, that Christ was *ετεροῦσιος*, or *ἀνομόσιος*, i. e. unlike the Father, as well in his essence, as in other respects.^b Under this general division, many other subordinate sects were comprehended, whose subtilties and refinements have been but obscurely developed by the ancient writers. The Arian cause suffered as much from the discord and animosities that reigned among these sects, as from the la-

^a See Prud. Maran's *Dissert. sur le Semiarians*, of which the learned Voigt has given a second edition in his *Biblioth. Hæresiol.* tom. ii. p. 119.

^b See Basnage's *Dissert. de Eunomio*, in the *Lectiones Antiquæ* of Canisius, tom. i. p. 272, where we find the *confession and apology* of Eunomius yet extant. See also Jo. Alb. Fabric. *Bibliotheca Græc.* vol. viii. p. 100—148, and the *Codex Theodos.* tom. vi. p. 147, 155, 157, 167, 200, &c.

boured confutations and the zealous efforts of the orthodox party.

XVII. The Arian controversy produced new sects, occasioned by the indiscreet lengths to which the contending parties pushed their respective opinions. And such, indeed, are too generally the unhappy effects of disputes, in which human passions have so large a part. Some, while they were careful in avoiding, and zealous in opposing the sentiments of Arius, ran headlong into systems of doctrine of an equally dangerous and pernicious nature. Others, in defending the Arian notions, went further than their chief, and thus fell into errors much more extravagant than those which he maintained. Thus does it generally happen in religious controversies; the human mind, amidst its present imperfection and infirmity, and its unhappy subjection to the empire of imagination and the dictates of sense, rarely follows the middle way in the search of truth, or contemplates spiritual and divine things with that accurateness and simplicity, that integrity and moderation, which alone can guard against erroneous extremes.

The Apollinarian heresy.

Among those who fell into such extremes by their inconsiderate violence in opposing the Arian system, Apollinaris the younger, bishop of Laodicea, may be justly placed, though otherwise a man of distinguished merit, and one whose learned labours had rendered to religion the most important services. He defended strenuously the *divinity* of Christ against the Arians; but, by indulging himself too freely in philosophical distinctions and subtilties, he was carried so far as to deny in some measure his *humanity*. He maintained that the body which Christ assumed, was endowed with a *sensitive* and not a *rational* soul; and that the divine nature performed the functions of reason, and supplied the place of what we call the *mind*, the spiritual and intellectual principle in man. And from this it seemed to follow as a natural consequence, that the *divine nature* in Christ was blended with the *human*, and suffered with it the pains of crucifixion and death itself.^c This great man was led astray, not only by his love of disputing, but also by an immoderate attachment to the Pla-

^c However erroneous the hypothesis of Apollinaris may have been, the consequences here drawn from it are not entirely just: for if it is true that the human soul does not, in any respect, suffer death by the dissolution of the body, the same must hold good with respect to the divine nature.

tonic doctrine concerning the twofold nature of the soul, which was too generally adopted by the divines of this age ; and which, undoubtedly, perverted their judgment in several respects, and led them to erroneous and extravagant decisions on various subjects.

Other errors beside that now mentioned, are imputed to Apollinaris by certain ancient writers ; but it is not easy to determine how far they deserve credit upon that head.^d Be that as it will, his doctrine was received by great numbers in almost all the eastern provinces, though by the different explications that were given of it, its votaries were subdivided into various sects. It did not, however, maintain its ground long ; but being attacked at the same time by the laws of the emperors, the decrees of councils, and the writings of the learned, it sunk by degrees under their united force.

XVIII. Marcellus, bishop of Ancyra, in Galatia, may be ranked in the same class with Apollinaris, if we are to give credit to Eusebius of Cæsarea, and the rest of his adversaries, who represent his explication of the doctrine of the trinity as bordering upon the Sabellian and Samosatene errors. Many, however, are of opinion, that Eusebius of Cæsarea, and the bishop of Nicomedia, who bore the same name, represented with partiality the sentiments of Marcellus, on account of the bitterness and vehemence which he discovered in his opposition to the Arians, and their protectors. But though it should be acknowledged that, in some particulars, the accusations of his enemies carried an aspect of partiality and resentment, yet it is manifest that they were far from being entirely groundless. For if the doctrine of Marcellus be attentively examined, it will appear that he considered the *Son* and the *Holy Ghost* as *two emanations* from the Divine Nature, which, after performing their respective offices, were to return again into the *substance* of the Father ; and every one will perceive, at first sight, how incompatible this opinion is with the belief of *three distinct persons in the godhead*. Beside this, a particular circumstance, which augmented

^d See Basnage's *Historia Hæresis Apollinaris*, published a second time by Voigt, in his *Bibliotheca Hæresologica*, tom. i. fascic. i. p. 1—96, and improved by some learned and important additions. See also tom. i. fascic. iii. and p. 607, of this latter work. The laws that were enacted against the followers of Apollinaris, are extant in the *Theodosian Code*, tom. vi. p. 144. See an account of Apollinaris and his *heresy*, in the English edition of Bayle's *Dictionary*, at the article Apollinaris.

considerably the aversion of many to Marcellus, as also the suspicion of his erring in a capital manner, was his obstinately refusing, toward the conclusion of his life, to condemn the tenets of his disciple Photinus.^e

xix. Photinus, bishop of Sirmium, may, with propriety, be placed at the head of those whom the Arian controversy was the occasion of seducing into the most extravagant errors. This prelate published, in the year 343, his opinions concerning the Deity, which were equally repugnant to the orthodox and Arian systems. His notions, which have been but obscurely, and indeed sometimes inconsistently represented by the ancient writers, amount to this, when attentively examined: “that Jesus Christ was born of the Holy Ghost and the Virgin Mary; that a certain *divine emanation*, or ray, which he called the *word*, descended upon this extraordinary man; that, on account of the union of the *divine word* with his *human nature*, Jesus was called the *Son of God*, nay, *God* himself; and that the *Holy Ghost* was not a distinct *person*, but a celestial *virtue* proceeding from the Deity.” The temerity of this bold innovator was chastised not only by the orthodox in the councils of Antioch^f and Milan, held in the years 345 and 347, and in that of Sirmium, whose date is uncertain, but also by the Arians, in one of their assemblies held at Sirmium, in the year 351. In consequence of all this, Photinus was degraded from the Episcopal dignity, and died in exile in the year 372.^g

xx. After him arose Macedonius, bishop of Constantinople, a very eminent Semiarian doctor, who, through the influence of the Eunomians, was deposed by the council of Constantinople, in the year 360, and sent into exile, where he formed the sect of the Macedonians, or Pneumatomachians. In his exile, he declared with the utmost freedom those sentiments which he had formerly either concealed, or at least taught with much circumspection. He considered the *Holy Ghost* as “a *divine*

The sect of
Photinus.

The heresy of
Macedonius.

^e See Montfaucon's *Diatriba de Causa Marcelli in Nova Collectione Patrum Græcorum*, tom. ii. p. 51; as also Gervaise, *Vie de S. Epiphane*, p. 42.

^f According to Dr. Lardner's account this council of Antioch, in 345, was held by the Arians, or Eusebians, and not by the orthodox, as our author affirms. See Lardner's *Credibility*, &c. vol. ix. p. 13; see also Athanas. *De Synod. N.* vi. vii. compared with Socrat. lib. ii. cap. xviii. xix.

^g Or in 375, as is concluded from Jerome's *Chronicle*. Matt. Larroque, *De Photino, et ejus multiplici condemnatione*. Thom. Ittigius, *Historia Photini in App. ad librum de Hæresiarchis ævi Apostolici*.

energy diffused throughout the universe, and not as a *person* distinct from the *Father* and the *Son*.”^h This opinion had many partisans in the Asiatic provinces; but the council assembled by Theodosius, in the year 381, at Constantinople, to which the second rank among the *œcumenical* or general councils is commonly attributed, put a stop, by its authority, to the growing evil, and crushed this rising sect before it had arrived at its full maturity. A hundred and fifty bishops, who were present at this council, gave the finishing touch to what the council of Nice had left imperfect, and fixed, in a full and determinate manner, the doctrine of *three Persons in one God*, which is as yet received among the generality of Christians. This venerable assembly did not stop here; they branded with infamy all the errors, and set a mark of execration upon all the heresies that were hitherto known; they advanced the bishop of Constantinople, on account of the eminence and extent of the city in which he resided, to the first rank after the Roman pontiff, and determined several other points, which they looked upon as essential to the well-being of the church in general.ⁱ

XXI. The frenzy of the ancient Gnostics, which had been so often vanquished, and in appearance removed, by the various remedies that had been used for that purpose, broke out anew in Spain. It was transported thither in the beginning of this century, by a certain person, named Marc of Memphis, in Egypt, whose converts at first were not very numerous. They increased, however, in process of time, and counted in their number several persons highly eminent for their learning and piety. Among others, Priscillian, a layman, distinguished by his birth, fortune, and eloquence, and afterward bishop of Abila, was infected with this odious doctrine, and became its most zealous and ardent defender. Hence he was accused by several bishops, and by a rescript obtained from the emperor Gratian, he was banished with his followers from Spain;^k but was restored some time after by an edict

The Priscillianists.

^h Socrates, *Hist. Eccles.* lib. iv. cap. iv.

ⁱ Socrates, *Hist. Eccles.* lib. v. cap. viii. p. 624. Sozomen, *Hist. Eccles.* lib. vii. cap. vii. p. 711.

^k This banishment was the effect of a sentence pronounced against Priscillian, and some of his followers, by a synod convened at Saragossa in the year 380; in consequence of which, Idacius and Ithacius, two cruel and persecuting ecclesiastics, obtained from Gratian the rescript above mentioned. See Sulpic. Sever. *Hist. Sacr.* lib. ii. cap. xlvii. p. 283, edit. Leipsic. 8vo.

of the same prince, to his country and his functions. His sufferings did not end here; for he was accused a second time, in the year 384,¹ before Maximus, who had procured the assassination of Gratian, and made himself master of Gaul; and by the order of that prince was put to death at Treves with some of his associates. The agents, however, by whose barbarous zeal this sentence was obtained, were justly regarded with the utmost abhorrence by the bishops of Gaul and Italy;^m for Christians had not yet learned that giving over heretics to be punished by the magistrates, was either an act of piety or justice." [No; this abominable doctrine was reserved for those times, when religion was to become an instrument of despotism, or a pretext for the exercise of malevolence, vengeance, and pride.]

The death of Priscillian was less pernicious to the progress of his opinions, than might naturally have been expected. His doctrine not only survived him, but was propagated through the greatest part of Spain and Gaul. And even so far down as the sixth century, the followers of this unhappy man gave much trouble to the bishops and clergy in these provinces.

xxii. None of the ancient writers have given an accurate account of the doctrine of the Priscillianists. Ma-
ny, on the contrary, by their injudicious representations of it, have highly disfigured it, and added new degrees of obscurity to a system which was before sufficiently dark and perplexed. It appears, however, from authentic records, that the difference between their doctrine, and that of the Manicheans, was not very considerable. For "they denied the *reality* of Christ's birth and incarnation; maintained that the visible universe was not the production of the Supreme Deity, but of some *demon*, or malignant

Their doctrine.

[E] Upon the death of Gratian, who had favoured Priscillian, toward the latter end of his reign, Ithacius presented to Maximus a petition against him; whereupon this prince appointed a *council* to be held at Bordeaux, from which Priscillian appealed to the prince himself. Sulp. Sever. lib. ii. cap. xlix. p. 287.

[F] It may be interesting to the reader to hear the character of the first person that introduced *civil* persecution into the Christian church. "He was a man abandoned to the most corrupt indolence, and without the least tincture of true piety. He was audacious, talkative, impudent, luxurious, and a slave to his belly. He accused as heretics, and as protectors of Priscillian, all those whose lives were consecrated to the pursuit of piety and knowledge, or distinguished by acts of mortification and abstinence, &c. Such is the character which Sulpicius Severus, who had an extreme aversion to the sentiments of Priscillian, gives us of Ithacius, bishop of Sossuha, by whose means he was put to death.

n See Sulp. Sever. *Hist. Sacr.* edit. Leips. 8vo. 1709, where Martin, the truly apostolical bishop of Tours, says to Maximus, *Novum esse et inauditum nefas ut causam ecclesiæ judex seculi judicaret.* See also *Dial.* iii. de *vita Martini*, cap. xi. p. 495.

principle; adopted the doctrine of *æons* or emanations, from the divine nature; considered human bodies as prisons formed by the author of evil, to enslave celestial minds; condemned marriage, and disbelieved the resurrection of the body." Their rule of life and manners was rigid and severe; and the accounts which many have given of their lasciviousness and intemperance deserve not the least credit, as they are totally destitute of evidence and authority. That the Priscillianists were guilty of dissimulation upon some occasions, and deceived their adversaries by cunning stratagems, is true; but that they held it as a maxim, that lying and perjury were *lawful*, is a most notorious falsehood, without even the least shadow of probability," however commonly this odious doctrine has been laid to their charge. In the heat of controversy, the eye of passion and prejudice is too apt to confound the principles and opinions of men with their practice.

XXIII. To what we have here said concerning those famous sects which made a noise in the world, it

Inferior sects.

will not be improper to add some account of those of a less considerable and inferior kind.

Ardæus, a man of remarkable virtue, being excommunicated in Syria, on account of the freedom and importunity with which he censured the corrupt and licentious manners of the clergy, formed an assembly of those who were attached to him, and became by his own appointment their bishop. Banished into Scythia, by the emperor, he went among the Goths, where his sect flourished and augmented considerably. The ancient writers are not agreed about the time in which we are to date the origin of this sect. With respect to its religious institutions, we know that they differed in some points from those observed by other Christians; and particularly, that the followers of Ardæus celebrated Easter, or the paschal feast, with the Jews, contrary to the express decree of the council of Nice. With respect to their doctrine, several errors have been imputed to

o See Simon de Vries, *Dissert. Critica de Priscillianistis*, printed at Utrecht, in the year 1745, in 4to. The only defect in this dissertation is the implicit manner in which the author follows Beausobre's *History of the Manicheans*, taking every thing for granted which is affirmed in that work. See also Franc. Girvesii *Historia Priscillianistrium Chronologica*, published at Rome in the year 1750, in 8vo. We find, moreover, in the twenty-seventh volume of the *Opusculum Scientificum* of Angelus Calogera, a treatise entitled *Bachiarus Illustratus, seu de Priscillianiana Hæresi dissertatio*; but this dissertation appears rather intended to clear up the affair of Bachiarus, than to give a full account of the Priscillianists and their doctrine.

them,^p and this, among others, that they attributed to the Deity a human form.

XXIV. The Grecian and oriental writers place, in this century, the rise of the sect of the Messalians, or Messalians or Euchites. Euchites, whose doctrine and discipline were indeed much more ancient, and subsisted even before the birth of Christ, in Syria, Egypt, and other eastern countries, but who do not seem to have been formed into a religious body before the latter end of the age of which we now write. These fanatics, who lived after the monkish fashion, and withdrew from all commerce and society with their fellow-creatures, seem to have derived their name from their habit of continual *prayer*. "They imagined, that the mind of every man was inhabited by an *evil demon*, whom it was impossible to expel by any other means than by constant prayer and singing of hymns; and that when this malignant spirit was cast out, the *pure mind* returned to God, and was again united to the *divine essence* from whence it had been separated." To this leading tenet they added many other enormous opinions, which bear a manifest resemblance of the Manichean doctrine, and are evidently drawn from the same source from whence the Manicheans derived their errors, even from the tenets of the oriental philosophy.^q In a word, the Euchites were a sort of mystics, who imagined, according to the oriental notion, that two souls resided in man, the one *good*, and the other *evil*; and who were zealous in hastening the return of the good spirit to God, by contemplation and prayer. The external air of piety and devotion, which accompanied this sect, imposed upon many; while the Greeks, on the other hand, opposed it with vehemence in all succeeding ages.

It is proper to observe here, that the title of Messalians and Euchites had a very extensive application among the Greeks, and the orientals, who gave it to all those who endeavoured to raise the soul to God by recalling and withdrawing it from all terrestrial and sensible objects; however these enthusiasts might differ from each other in their opinions on other subjects.

^p Epiphanius, *Hæres.* lxx. p. 811. Augustin *De Hæres.* cap. i. Theodoret. *Fabul. Hæret.* lib. iv. cap. ix. p. 671. Jo. Joach. Schroder. *Dissertat. de Ardaënis*, published in Voigt's *Bibliotheca Historia Hæresiolog.* tom. i. part iii. p. 578.

^q Epiphanius, *Hæres.* lxxx. p. 1067. Theodoret. *Hæret. Fabul.* lib. iv. cap. x. p. 672. Timotheus, *Presbyter de receptione Hæreticor.* published in the third volume of Cotelæus's *Monumenta Ecclesiæ Græcæ.* p. 403. Jac. Tollii *Insignia itineris Italici*, 1110. Assemani *Bibliotheca Orientalis Vaticana*, tom. i. p. 128. tom. iii. part ii. p. 172, &c.

xxv. Toward the conclusion of this century, two opposite sects involved Arabia and the adjacent countries in the troubles and tumults of a new controversy. These jarring factions went by the names of Antidicomarianites and Collyridians. The former maintained, that the Virgin Mary did not always preserve her immaculate state, but received the embraces of her husband Joseph after the birth of Christ. The latter, on the contrary, who were singularly favoured by the female sex, running into the opposite extreme, worshipped the blessed Virgin as a goddess, and judged it necessary to appease her anger, and seek her favour and protection by libations, sacrifices, and oblations of *cakes (collyrida)* and such like services.^r

Other sects might be mentioned here, but they are too obscure and inconsiderable to deserve notice.

Epiphan. *Hæres.* lxxviii lxxix. p. 1003. and 1057.

THE FIFTH CENTURY.

PART I.

EXTERNAL HISTORY OF THE CHURCH.

CHAPTER I.

CONCERNING THE PROSPEROUS EVENTS THAT HAPPENED TO THE CHURCH.

I. IN order to arrive at a true knowledge of the causes to which we are to attribute the outward state of the church, and the events which happened to it during this century, we must keep in view the civil history of this period of time. It is therefore proper to observe that, in the beginning of this century, the Roman empire was divided into two distinct sovereignties, of which the one comprehended the eastern provinces; the other, those of the west. Arcadius, the emperor of the east, reigned at Constantinople; and Honorius, who governed the western provinces, chose Ravenna for the place of his residence. This latter prince, remarkable only for the sweetness of his temper and the goodness of his heart, neglected the great affairs of the empire, and inattentive to the weighty duties of his station, held the reins of government with an unsteady hand. The Goths took advantage of this criminal indolence; made incursions into Italy; laid waste its fairest provinces; and sometimes carried their desolations as far as Rome, which they ravaged and plundered in the most dreadful manner. These calamities, which fell upon the western part of the empire from the Gothic depredations, were followed by others still more dreadful under the succeeding emperors. A fierce and warlike people issuing out of Germany, overspread Italy, Gaul, and Spain, the noblest of all the European provinces, and erected new kingdoms in these fertile countries; and Odoacer at last, at the head of the Heruli, having conquered Augustulus, in the year 476, gave the mortal blow to the western empire, and reduced all Italy under his dominion. About sixteen years after this, Theodoric, king of the Ostrogoths,

The state of
the Roman
empire.

made war upon these barbarian invaders, at the request of Zeno, emperor of the east, conquered Odoacer in several battles, and obtained as the fruits of his victories a kingdom for the Ostrogoths in Italy, which subsisted under various turns of fortune from the year 493 to 552.^a

These new monarchs of the west pretended to acknowledge the supremacy of the emperors who resided at Constantinople, and gave some faint external marks of a disposition to reign in subordination to them; but in reality, they ruled with an absolute independence in their respective governments, and as appears particularly by the dominion exercised by Theodoric in Italy, left nothing remaining to the eastern emperors but a mere shadow of power and authority.^b

II. These constant wars, and the inexpressible calamities with which they were attended, were undoubtedly detrimental to the cause and progress of Christianity. It must, however, be acknowledged, that the Christian emperors, especially those who ruled in the east, were active and assiduous in extirpating the remains of the ancient superstitions. Theodosius the younger distinguished himself in this pious and noble work, and many remarkable monuments of his zeal in this matter are still preserved;^c such as the laws which enjoined either the destruction of the heathen temples, or the dedication of them to Christ and his saints; the edicts by which he abrogated the sacrilegious rites and ceremonies of paganism, and removed from all offices and employments in the state such as persevered in their attachment to the absurdities of polytheism.

This spirit of reformation appeared with less vigour in the western empire. There the feasts of Saturn and Pan, the combats of the gladiators, and other rites that were instituted in honour of the pagan deities, were celebrated with the utmost freedom and impunity; and persons of the highest rank and authority professed publicly the re-

^a See for a fuller illustration of this branch of history, the learned work of De Bos, entitled, *Histoire Critique de la Monarchie Française*, tom. i. p. 258; as also Masco's *History of the Germans*.

^b Car. du Fresne, *Dissert.* xxiii. ad *Histor. Ludovici S.* p. 280. Muratorii *Antiq. Ital.* tom. ii. p. 578, 832. Giannone, *Histoire de Naples*, tom. i. p. 207. Jo. Cochlaci *Vita Theodorici Ostrogothorum regis*, printed in 4to. in the year 1699. with the observations and remarks of Peringskiöld.

^c See the *Theodosian Code*, tom. vi. p. 327.

ligion of their idolatrous ancestors.^d This liberty was, however, from time to time, reduced within narrower limits; and all those public sports and festivals, that were more peculiarly incompatible with the genius and sanctity of the Christian religion, were every where abolished.^e

III. The limits of the church continued to extend themselves, and gained ground daily upon the idolatrous nations both in the eastern and western empires. In the east, the inhabitants of mount Libanus and Antilibanus, being dreadfully infested with wild beasts, implored the assistance and counsels of the famous Simeon the Stylite, of whom we shall have occasion to speak hereafter. Simeon gave them for answer that the only effectual method of removing this calamity was to abandon the superstitious worship of their ancestors, and substitute the Christian religion in its place. The docility of this people, joined to the extremities to which they were reduced, engaged them to follow the counsels of this holy man. They embraced Christianity, and in consequence of their conversion, they had the pleasure of seeing their savage enemies abandon their habitations; if we may believe the writers who affirm the truth of this prodigy. The same Simeon, by his influence and authority, introduced the Christian worship into a certain district of the Arabians; some allege that this also was effected by a miracle, which to me appears somewhat more than doubtful.^f To these instances of the progress of the gospel, we may add the conversion of a considerable number of Jews in the isle of Crete, who, finding themselves grossly deluded by the impious pretensions of an impostor, called Moses Cretensis,^g who gave himself

Nations
converted to
Christianity.

^d See the *Saturnalia* of Macrobius, lib. i. p. 100, edit. Gronov. Scipio Maffei *delli Infiteatri*, lib. i. p. 56, 57. Pierre le Brun, *Hist. Critique des pratiques superstitieuses*, tom. i. p. 237. And above all Montfaucon, *Diss. de moribus tempore Theodosii M. et Arcadii*, which is to be found in Latin, in the eleventh volume of the works of St. Chrysostom, and in French, in the twentieth volume of the *Memoires de l'Academie des Inscriptions et des Belles Lettres*, p. 197.

^e Anastasius prohibited, towards the conclusion of this century, the combats with the wild beasts and other shows. Asseman. *Biblioth. Orient. Vatic.* tom. i. p. 246.

^f Assemani *Bibl. Orient. Vatic.* tom. i. p. 246.

^g We shall give the relation of Socrates concerning this impostor, in the words of the learned and estimable author of the *Remarks on Ecclesiastical History*. "In the time of Theodosius the younger an impostor arose, called Moses Cretensis. He pretended to be a sea Moses, sent to deliver the Jews who dwelt in Crete, and promised to divide the sea, and give them a safe passage through it. They assembled together, with their wives and children, and followed him to a promontory. He there commanded them to cast themselves into the sea. Many of them obeyed and perished in the waters, and many were taken up and saved by fishermen. Upon this, the deluded Jews would have torn the impostor to pieces; but he escaped them, and was seen no more." See *Jortin's Remarks*, &c. first edit. vol. iii. p. 331.

out for the Messiah, opened their eyes upon the truth, and embraced the Christian religion of their own accord.^h

iv. The German nations, who rent in pieces the Roman empire in the west, were not all converted to Christianity at the same time. Some of them had embraced the truth before the time of their incursion; and such, among others, was the case of the Goths. Others, after having erected their little kingdoms in the empire, embraced the gospel, that they might thus live with more security amidst a people, who, in general, professed the Christian religion. It is however uncertain, and likely to continue so, at what time, and by whose ministry, the Vandals, Sueves, and Alans, were converted to Christianity. With respect to the Burgundians, who inhabited the banks of the Rhine, and who passed from thence into Gaul, we are informed by Socrates,ⁱ that they embraced the gospel of their own accord, from a notion that Christ, or the God of the Romans, who had been represented to them as a most powerful being, would defend them against the rapines and incursions of the Huns. They afterward sided with the Arian party, to which also the Vandals, Sueves, and Goths, were zealously attached. All these fierce and warlike nations judged a religion excellent, in proportion to the success which crowned the arms of those that professed it, and esteemed, consequently, that doctrine the best, whose professors had gained the greatest number of victories. When therefore they saw the Romans possessed of an empire much more extensive than that of any other people, they concluded that Christ, their God, was of all others the most worthy of religious homage.

v. It was the same principle and the same views that engaged Clovis,^h king of the Salii, a nation of the Franks, to embrace Christianity. This prince, whose signal valour was accompanied with barbarity, arrogance, and injustice, founded the kingdom of the Franks in Gaul, after having made himself master of a great part of that country, and meditated with a singular eagerness and avidity the conquest of the whole. His conversion to

^h Socrates, *Hist. Eccles.* lib. vii. cap. xxxviii. p. 393.

ⁱ Idem, *Hist. Eccles.* lib. vii. cap. xxx. p. 371.

^k Beside the name of Clovis, this prince was also called Clodovæus, Hindovicus, Ludovicus, and Ludiciv.

the Christian religion is dated from the battle he fought with the Alemans in the year 496, at a village called Tolbiacum ;^l in which, when the Franks began to give ground, and their affairs seemed desperate, he implored the assistance of Christ, whom his queen Clothildis, daughter of the king of the Burgundians, had often represented to him in vain, as the *Son of the true God*, and solemnly engaged himself by a vow to worship him as his God if he rendered him victorious over his enemies. Victory decided in favour of the Franks ; and Clovis, faithful to his engagement, received baptism at Rheims,^m toward the conclusion of that same year, after having been instructed by Remigius, bishop of that city, in the doctrines of the gospel.ⁿ The example of the king had such a powerful effect upon the minds of his subjects, that three thousand of them immediately followed it, and were baptized with him. Many are of opinion, that the desire of extending his dominions was that which contributed principally to render Clovis faithful to his engagement ; though some influence may also be allowed to the zeal and exhortations of his queen Clothildis. Be that as it will, nothing is more certain than that his profession of Christianity was, in effect, of great use to him, both in confirming and enlarging his empire.

The miracles, which are said to have been wrought at the baptism of Clovis, are utterly unworthy of the smallest degree of credit. Among others the principal prodigy, that of the phial full of oil said to be brought from heaven by a milkwhite dove, during the ceremony of baptism, is a fiction, or rather perhaps an imposture ; a pretended miracle contrived by artifice and fraud.^o Pious frauds of this

^l Tolbiacum is thought to be the present Zulpick, which is about twelve miles from Cologne.

^m See Gregory of Tours, *Historia Francorum*, lib. ii. cap. xxx. xxxi. Henry count Bunau's *Historia Imperii Romano Germanici*, tom. i. p. 588. De Bos's *Histoire Critique de la Monarchie Française*, tom. ii. p. 340.

ⁿ The epitomizer of the history of the Franks tells us, that Remigius having preached to Clovis, and those who had been baptized with him, a sermon on the passion of our Saviour ; the king, in hearing him, could not forbear crying out, " if I had been there with my Franks, that should not have happened."

^o The truth of this miracle has been denied by the learned John James Chiffet, in his book *De ampulla Rhemensi*, printed in folio, at Antwerp, in the year 1651 ; and it has been affirmed by Vertot, in the *Memoires de l'Academie des Inscriptions et des Belles Lettres*, tom. iv. p. 350. After a mature consideration of what has been alleged on both sides of the question, I can scarcely venture to deny the fact ; I am therefore of opinion, that in order to confirm and fix the wavering faith of this barbarian prince, Remigius had prepared his measures beforehand, and trained a pigeon by vast application and dexterity, in such a manner that, during the baptism of Clovis, it descended from the roof of the church with a phial of oil. Among the records of this century, we find

nature were very commonly practised in Gaul and in Spain at this time, in order to captivate, with more facility, the minds of a rude and barbarous people, who were scarcely susceptible of a rational conviction.

The conversion of Clovis is looked upon by the learned as the origin of the titles of *most Christian king*, and *eldest son of the church*, which have been so long attributed to the kings of France.^p For if we except this prince, all the kings of those barbarous nations who seized upon the Roman provinces, were either yet involved in the darkness of paganism, or infected with the Arian heresy.

VI. Celestine, the Roman pontiff, sent Palladius into Ireland to propagate the Christian religion among the rude inhabitants of that island. This first mission^q was not attended with much fruits; nor did the success of Palladius bear any proportion to his laborious and pious endeavours. After his death, the same pontiff employed, in this mission, Succathus, a native of Scotland, whose name he changed into that of Patrick, and who arrived among the Irish in the year 432. The success of his ministry, and the number and importance of his pious exploits, stand upon record as undoubted proofs not only of his resolution and patience, but also of his dexterity and address. Having attacked, with much more success than his predecessor, the errors and superstitions of that uncivilized people, and brought great numbers of them over to the Christian religion, he founded, in the year 472, the archbishopric of Armagh,^r which has ever since remained the

accounts of many such miracles. ¶ There is one circumstance, which obliges me to differ from Dr. Mosheim upon this point, and to look upon the story of the famous phial rather as a *mere fiction*, than as a *pious fraud* or pretended miracle brought about by artifice; and that circumstance is, that Gregory of Tours, from whom we have a full account of the conversion and baptism of Clovis, and who, from his proximity to this time, may almost be called a contemporary writer, has not made the least mention of this famous miracle. This omission, in a writer whom the Roman catholics themselves consider as an over credulous historian, amounts to a proof that in his time this fable was not yet invented.

p See Gab. Daniel et De Camps, *Dissert. de titulo Regis Christianissimi*, *Journal des Sçavans*, for the year 1720, p. 243, 336, 404, 448. *Memoires de l'Academie des Inscriptions*, tom. xx. p. 466.

¶ q From the fragments of the lives of some Irish bishops, who are said to have converted many of their countrymen in the fourth century, archbishop Usher concludes that Palladius was not the first bishop of Ireland. See his *Antiquities of the British Church*. But it has been evidently proved, among others by Bollandus, that these fragments are of no earlier date than the twelfth century, and are beside the most of them fabulous. Dr. Mosheim's opinion is further confirmed by the authority of Prosper, which is decisive in this matter.

r See the *Acta Sanctorum*, tom. ii. Martii, p. 517, tom. iii. Februar. p. 131, 179, Jac. Waraci *Hibernia Sacra*, printed in folio at Dublin, 1717. This latter published at Lon-

metropolitan see of the Irish nation. Hence this famous missionary, though not the first who brought among that people the light of the gospel, has yet been justly entitled *the Apostle of the Irish*, and the father of the Hibernian church, and is still generally acknowledged and revered in that honourable character.

VII. The causes and circumstances by which these different nations were engaged to abandon the superstition of their ancestors, and to embrace the religion of Jesus, may be easily deduced from the facts we have related in the history of their conversion. It would, indeed, be an instance of the blindest and most perverse partiality not to acknowledge that the labours and zeal of great and eminent men contributed to this happy purpose, and were the means by which the darkness of many was turned into light. But on the other hand, they must be very inattentive and superficial observers of things who do not perceive that the fear of punishment, the prospect of honours and advantages, and the desire of obtaining succour against their enemies from the countenance of the Christians, or the miraculous influences of their religion, were the prevailing motives that induced the greatest part to renounce the service of their impotent gods.

The causes of these conversions.

How far these conversions were due to real miracles attending the ministry of these early preachers, is a matter extremely difficult to be determined. For though I am persuaded that those pious men, who, in the midst of many dangers, and in the face of obstacles seemingly invincible, endeavoured to spread the light of Christianity through the barbarous nations, were sometimes accompanied with the more peculiar presence and succours of the Most High;^s yet I am equally convinced, that the greatest part of the prodigies recorded in the histories of this age, are liable to the strongest suspicions of falsehood or imposture. The simplicity and ignorance of the generality in those times

don, in 1656, in 8vo. *the Works of St. Patrick*. The synods, that were held by this eminent missionary, are to be found in Wilkins's *Concilia Magnæ Brit. et Hiberniæ*, tom. i. p. 2. With respect to the famous cave, which is called the *Purgatory of St. Patrick*, the reader may consult Le Brun, *Histoire Critique des pratiques superstitieuses*, tom. iv. p. 34.

^s There is a remarkable passage, relating to the miracles of this century, in Æneas Gazeus's *Dialogue concerning the Immortality of the Soul*, &c. entitled, *Theophrastus*, p. 78, 80, 81, edit. Barthii. See the controversy concerning the time when miracles ceased in the church, that was carried on some years ago, on occasion of Dr. Middleton's *Free Inquiry*, &c.

furnished the most favourable occasion for the exercise of fraud; and the imprudence of impostors, in contriving false miracles, was artfully proportioned to the credulity of the vulgar; while the sagacious and the wise, who perceived these cheats, were obliged to silence by the dangers that threatened their lives and fortunes, if they detected the artifice." Thus does it generally happen in human life, that when the discovery and profession of the truth is attended with danger, the prudent are *silent*, the multitude *believe*, and impostors *triumph*.

CHAPTER II.

CONCERNING THE CALAMITOUS EVENTS WHICH HAPPENED TO THE CHURCH DURING THIS CENTURY.

I. IT has been already observed, that the Goths, the Heruli, the Franks, the Huns, and the Vandals, with other fierce and warlike nations, for the most part strangers to Christianity, had invaded the Roman empire, and rent it asunder in the most deplorable manner. Amidst these calamities the Christians were grievous, nay, we may venture to say, the principal sufferers. It is true, these savage nations were much more intent upon the acquisition of wealth and dominion, than upon the propagation or support of the pagan superstitions; nor did their cruelty and opposition to the Christians arise from any religious principle, or from an enthusiastic desire to ruin the cause of Christianity; it was merely by the instigation of the pagans who remained yet in the empire, that they were excited to treat with such severity and violence the followers of Christ. The painful consideration of their abrogated rites, and the hopes of recovering their former liberty and privileges by the means of their new masters, induced the worshippers of the gods to seize with avidity every opportunity of inspiring them with the most bitter aversion to the Christians. Their endeavours, however, were without the desired effect, and their expectations

^t This is ingenuously confessed by the Benedictine monks. *Histoire Littéraire de la France*, tom. ii. p. 33, and happily expressed by Livy, *Hist. lib. xxiv. cap. x. § 6. Prodigia multa nuntiata sunt, quæ quo magis credebant simplices et religiosi homines, eo plura nuntiabantur.*

^u Solitius Severus, *Dial. i. p. 438. Ep. i. p. 457. Dial. iii. cap. ii. p. 487.*

were entirely disappointed. The greatest part of these barbarians embraced Christianity; though it be also true, that in the beginning of their usurpations, the professors of that religion suffered heavily under the rigour of their government.

II. To destroy the credit of the gospel, and to excite the hatred of the multitude against the Christians, the pagans took occasion, from the calamities and tumults which distracted the empire, to renew the obsolete complaint of their ancestors against Christianity, as the source of these complicated woes. They alleged, that before the coming of Christ, the world was blessed with peace and prosperity; but that since the progress of his religion every where, the gods, filled with indignation to see their worship neglected and their altars abandoned, had visited the earth with those plagues and desolations, which increased every day. This feeble objection was entirely removed by Augustin, in his book *concerning the city of God*; a work extremely rich and ample in point of matter, and filled with the most profound and diversified erudition. It also drew a complete confutation from the learned pen of Orosius, who in a history written expressly for that purpose, showed, with the utmost evidence, that not only the same calamities now complained of, but also plagues of a much more dreadful kind, had afflicted mankind before the Christian religion appeared in the world.

he attempts
of the pagans
to destroy
their credit.

The calamities of the times produced still more pernicious effects upon the religious sentiments of the Gauls. They introduced among that people the most desperate notions, and led many of them to reject the belief of a superintending Providence, and to exclude the Deity from the government of the universe. Against these frenetic infidels, Salvian wrote his book *concerning the divine government*.

III. Hitherto we have given only a general view of the sufferings of the Christians; it is however proper that we enter into a more distinct and particular account of that matter.

The persecutions they
suffered.

In Gaul, and the neighbouring provinces, the Goths and Vandals, whose cruel and sacrilegious soldiery respected neither the majesty of religion nor the rights of humanity, committed acts of barbarity and violence against a multitude of Christians.

In Britain a long series of tumults and divisions involved the Christians in many troubles. When the affairs of the

Romans declined in that country, the Britons were tormented by the Picts and Scots, nations remarkable for their violence and ferocity. Hence, after many sufferings and disasters, they chose, in the year 445, Vortigern for their king. This prince, finding himself too weak to make head against the enemies of his country, called the Anglo Saxons from Germany to his aid in the year 449. The consequences of this measure were pernicious; and it soon appeared that this people, who came as auxiliaries into Britain, oppressed it with calamities more grievous than those which it had suffered from its enemies. For the Saxons aimed at nothing less than to subdue the ancient inhabitants of the country, and to reduce the whole island under their dominion. Hence a most bloody and obstinate war arose between the Britons and Saxons, which, after having been carried on, during the space of a hundred and thirty years, with various success, ended in the defeat of the Britons, who were forced to yield to the Anglo Saxons, and to seek a retreat in Batavia and Cambria. During these commotions, the state of the British church was deplorable beyond expression; it was almost totally overwhelmed and extinguished by the Anglo Saxons, who adhered to the worship of the gods, and put an immense number of Christians to the most cruel deaths.^w

iv. In Persia, the Christians suffered grievously by the imprudent zeal of Abdas, bishop of Suza, who pulled down the *pyræum*, which was a temple dedicated to fire. For when this obstinate prelate was ordered by the king, Isdegerdes, to rebuild that temple, he refused to comply; for which he was put to death in the year 414, and the churches of the Christians were levelled to the ground. This persecution was not, however, of long duration, but seems to have been extinguished soon after its commencement.

Vararenes, the son of the monarch already mentioned, treated the Christians in a manner yet more barbarous and inhuman in the year 421, to which he was led partly by the instigation of the magi, and partly by his keen aversion to the Romans, with whom he was at war. For as often as the Persians and the Romans were at variance, so often did the Christians, who dwelt in Persia, feel new and re-

^w See beside Bede and Gilda, Jac. Usser. *Antiquitat. Ecclesiæ Britannicæ*, cap. xii. p. 415. Rapin Thoyras, *Histoire d'Angleterre*, tom. i. livr. ii. p. 91.

doubled effects of their monarch's wrath, and this from a prevailing notion, not perhaps entirely groundless, that they favoured the Romans, and rendered real services to their republic.^x In this persecution, a prodigious number of Christians perished in the most exquisite tortures, and by various kinds of punishments.^y But they were, at length, delivered from these cruel oppressions by the peace that was made in the year 427, between Vararenes and the Roman empire.^z

It was not from the pagans only that the Christians were exposed to suffering and persecution; they were moreover harassed and oppressed in a variety of ways by the Jews, who lived in great opulence, and enjoyed a high degree of favour and credit in several parts of the east.^a Among these none treated them with greater rigour and arrogance than Gamaliel, the patriarch of that nation, a man of the greatest power and influence, whose authority and violence were, on that account, restrained in the year 415, by an express and particular edict of Theodosius the younger.^b

v. It does not appear from any records of history now remaining, that any writings against Christ and his followers were published in this century, unless we consider as such the histories of Olympiodorus^c and Zosimus, of whom the latter loses no opportunity of reviling the Christians, and loading them with the most unjust and bitter reproaches. But though the number of books written against Christianity was so small, yet we are not to suppose that its adversaries had laid aside the spirit of opposition. The schools of the philosophers and rhetoricians were yet open in Greece, Syria, and Egypt; and there is no doubt but that these subtle teachers laboured assiduously to corrupt the minds of the youth, and to instil into them at least some of the principles of the ancient superstition.^d The history of these times, and the writings of several Christians who lived in this century, exhibit evident proofs of these clandestine methods of opposing the progress of the gospel.

Christianity
opposed by
secret ene-
mies.

x Theodoret, *Hist. Eccles.* lib. v. cap. xxix. p. 245. Bayle's *Dictionary*, at the article Abdas Barbeyrac, *De la Morale des Peres*, p. 320.

y Jos. Sim. Assemani *Biblioth. Oriental. Vatican.* tom. i. p. 182, 248.

z Socrates, *Hist. Eccles.* lib. vii. cap. xx. p. 358.

a Socrates, *Hist. Eccles.* lib. vii. cap. xiii. p. 349, cap. xvi. p. 353. *Codex Theodos.* tom. vi. p. 265.

b *Codex Theodos.* tom. vi. p. 262.

c Photius, *Biblioth. Cod.* lxxx. p. 178.

d Zacharias Mitylen, *De Opificio Dei*, p. 165, 200, edit. Barthii.

PART II.

INTERNAL HISTORY OF THE CHURCH.

CHAPTER I.

CONCERNING THE STATE OF LEARNING AND PHILOSOPHY.

I. **THOUGH** in this century the illiterate and ignorant were advanced to eminent and important stations, both ecclesiastical and civil, yet we must not conclude from thence, that the sciences were held in universal contempt. The value of learning, and the excellence of the *finer arts*, were yet generally acknowledged among the thinking part of mankind. Hence public schools were erected in almost all the great cities, such as Constantinople, Rome, Marseilles, Edessa, Nisibis, Carthage, Lyons, and Treves; and public instructors of capacity and genius were set apart for the education of the youth, and maintained at the expense of the emperors. Several bishops and monks contributed also to the advancement of knowledge, by imparting to others their small stock of learning and science. But the infelicity of the times, the incursions of the barbarous nations, and the scarcity of great geniuses, rendered the fruits of these excellent establishments much less than their generous founders and promoters expected.

II. In the western provinces, and especially in Gaul, there were indeed some men eminently distinguished by their learning and talents, and every way proper to serve as models to the lower orders in the republic of letters. Of this we have abundant proof from the writings of Macrobius, Salvian, Vincentius, bishop of Liris, Ennodius, Sidonius Appollinaris, Claudian, Mamertus, Dracontius, and others, who, though in some respects inferior to the more celebrated authors of antiquity, are yet far from being destitute of elegance, and discover in their productions a most laborious application to literary researches of various kinds. But the barbarous nations, which either spread desolation, or formed settlements in the Roman territories, choked the growth of those genial seeds,

which the hand of science had sowed in more auspicious times. These savage invaders, possessed of no other ambition than that of conquest, and looking upon military courage as the only source of true virtue and solid glory, beheld of consequence the arts and sciences with the utmost contempt. Wherever therefore they extended their conquests, ignorance and darkness followed their steps, and the culture of the sciences was confined to the priests and monks alone. And even among these, learning degenerated from its primitive lustre, and put on the most unseemly and fantastic form. Amidst the seduction of corrupt examples, the alarms of perpetual danger, and the horrors and devastations of war, the sacerdotal and monastic orders lost gradually all taste for solid science, in the place of which they substituted a lifeless spectre, an enormous phantom of barbarous erudition. They indeed kept public schools, and instructed the youth in what they called the *seven liberal arts*; but these, as we learn from Augustin's account of them consisted only of a certain number of dry, subtile, and useless precepts; and were consequently more adapted to load and perplex the memory, than to improve and strengthen the judgment. So that, toward the conclusion of this century, the sciences were almost totally extinguished; at least, what remained of them was no more than a shadowy form, without either solidity or consistence.

III. The few that applied themselves to the study of philosophy in this age, had not as yet embraced the doctrine or method of Aristotle. They looked upon the system of this eminent philosopher, as a labyrinth beset with thorns and thistles; and yet, had they been able to read and understand his works, it is probable that many of them would have become his followers. The doctrine of Plato had a more established reputation, which it had enjoyed for several ages, and was considered not only as less subtile and difficult than that of the Stagirite, but also as more conformable to the genius and spirit of the Christian religion. Besides, the most valuable of Plato's works were translated into Latin by Victorinus, and were thus adapted to general use. And Sidonius Appollinaris^g

The state
of philosophy
in the
west.

^d These seven liberal arts were grammar, rhetoric, logic, arithmetic, music, geometry, and astronomy. See Cent. viii. Part ii. ch. ii. in this volume.

^e The passages of different writers, that prove what is here advanced, are collected by Launojus, in his book, *De varia Aristotelis fortuna in Academia Parisiensi*.

^f See Augustini *Confessionum*, lib. i. cap. ii. § i. p. 105, 106, tom. i. opp.

^g See his *Epistles*, book iv. ep. iii. xi. book ix. ep. ix.

informs us, that all those among the Latins, who had any inclination to the study of truth, fell into the Platonic notions, and followed that sage as their philosophical guide.

iv. The fate of learning was less deplorable among the Greeks and Orientals, than in the western provinces ; and not only the several branches of polite literature, but also the more solid and profound sciences, were cultivated by them with tolerable success. Hence we find among them more writers of genius and learning than in other countries. Those, who inclined to the study of law, resorted generally to Berytus, famous for its learned academy,^h or to Alexandria,ⁱ which latter city was frequented by the students of physic and chymistry. The professors of eloquence, poetry, philosophy, and the other liberal arts, taught the youth in public schools, which were erected in almost every city. Those however of Alexandria, Constantinople, and Edessa, were looked upon as superior to all others, both in point of erudition and method.^k

v. The doctrine and sect of the modern Platonics retained as yet, among the Syrians and Alexandrians, a considerable part of their ancient splendour. Olympiodorus, Hero,^l and other philosophers of the first rank, added a lustre to the Alexandrian school. That of Athens was rendered famous by the talents and erudition of Theophrastus, Plutarch, and his successor Syrian. These were the instructors of the renowned Proclus, who far surpassed the Platonic philosophers of this century, and acquired such a high degree of the public esteem, as enabled him to give new life to the doctrine of Plato, and restore it to its former credit in Greece.^m Marinus, of Neapolis, Ammonius the son of Hermias, Isidorus and Damascius, the disciples of Proclus, followed, with an ardent emulation, the traces of their master, and formed successors that resembled them in all respects. But the imperial laws, and the daily progress of the Christian religion gradually diminished the lustre and authority of these philosophers."

^h See Hasæi *Lib. de Academia Jureconsultorum Berytensi*; as also Mitylenæus, *De officio Dei*, p. 164.

ⁱ Zach. Mitylenæus, *De officio Dei*, p. 179.

^k Æneas Gazæus in *Theophrasto*, p. 6, 7, 16, &c.

^l Marinus, *vita Procli*, cap. ix. p. 19, edit. Fabricii.

^m The life of Proclus, written by Marinus, was published in 4to. at Hamburg, in the year 1700, by John Albert Fabricius, and was enriched, by this famous editor, with a great number of learned observations.

ⁿ See Æneas Gazæus in *Theophrasto*, p. 6, 7, 8, 13, edit. Barthii.

And as there were many of the Christian doctors who adopted the Platonic system, and were sufficiently qualified to explain it to the youth, this hindered, naturally, the schools of these heathen sages from being so much frequented as they had formerly been.

VI. The credit of the Platonic philosophy, and the preference that was given to it, as more excellent in itself, and less repugnant to the genius of the gospel than other systems, did not prevent the doctrine of Aristotle from coming to light after a long struggle, and forcing its way into the Christian church. The Platonists themselves interpreted, in their schools, some of the writings of Aristotle, particularly his *Dialectics*, and recommended that work to such of the youth as had a taste for logical discussions, and were fond of disputing. In this the Christian doctors imitated the manner of the heathen schools; and this was the first step to that universal dominion, which the Stagirite afterward obtained in the republic of letters. A second, and a yet larger stride, which the Aristotelian philosophy made toward this universal empire, was during the controversies which Origen had occasioned, and the Arian, Eutychian, Nestorian, and Pelagian dissensions, which, in this century, were so fruitful of calamities to the Christian church. Origen, as is well known, was zealously attached to the Platonic system. When therefore he was publicly condemned, many, to avoid the imputation of his errors, and to prevent their being counted among the number of his followers, adopted openly the philosophy of Aristotle, which was entirely different from that of Origen. The Nestorian, Arian, and Eutychian controversies were managed, or rather drawn out, on both sides, by a perpetual recourse to subtle distinctions, and captious sophisms. And no philosophy was so proper to furnish such weapons, as that of Aristotle; for that of Plato was far from being adapted to form the mind to the polemic arts. Beside, the Pelagian doctrine bore a striking resemblance of the Platonic opinions concerning God and the human soul; and this was an additional reason which engaged many to desert the Platonists, and to assume, at least, the name of Peripatetics.

The philosophy of Aristotle rises into credit.

CHAPTER II.

CONCERNING THE DOCTORS AND MINISTERS OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH,
AND ITS FORM OF GOVERNMENT.

I. SEVERAL causes contributed to bring about a change in the external form of ecclesiastical government. The power of the bishops, particularly those of the first order, was sometimes augmented and sometimes diminished, according as the times and the occasions offered; and in all these changes the intrigues of the court, and the political state of the empire, had much more influence than the rules of equity and wisdom.

These alterations were indeed matters of small moment. But an affair of much greater consequence drew now the general attention, and this was the vast augmentation of honours and rank that was at this time accumulated upon the bishops of Constantinople, in opposition to the most vigorous efforts of the Roman pontiff. In the preceding century, the council of Constantinople had, on account of the dignity and privileges of that imperial city, conferred upon its bishops a place among the first rulers of the Christian church. This new dignity adding fuel to their ambition, they extended their views of authority and dominion, and encouraged, no doubt, by the consent of the emperor, reduced the provinces of Asia, Thrace, and Pontus, under their ghostly jurisdiction. In this century they grasped at still further accessions of power; so that not only the whole eastern part of Illyricum was added to their former acquisitions, but they were also exalted to the highest summit of ecclesiastical authority. For by the twenty-eighth *canon* of the council held at Chalcedon in the year 451, it was resolved, that the same rights and honours which had been conferred upon the bishop of Rome, were due to the bishop of Constantinople on account of the equal dignity and lustre of the two cities, in which these prelates exercised their authority. The same council confirmed also, by a solemn act, the bishop of Constantinople in the spiritual government of those provinces over which he had ambitiously usurped the jurisdiction. Leo the Great, bishop of Rome, opposed with vehemence the passing of these decrees, and his opposition was seconded by that of several other prelates. But their efforts were vain, as the emperors threw

in their weight into the balance, and thus supported the decisions of the Grecian bishops.^o In consequence then of the decrees of this famous council, the bishop of Constantinople began to contend obstinately for the supremacy with the Roman pontiff, and to crush the bishops of Alexandria and Antioch, so as to make them feel the oppressive effects of his pretended superiority. And none distinguished himself more by his ambition and arrogance in this matter than Acacius, one of the bishops of that imperial city.^p

II. It was much about this time that Juvenal, bishop of Jerusalem, or rather of Ælia, attempted to withdraw himself and his church from the jurisdiction of the bishop of Cæsarea, and aspired after a place among the first prelates of the Christian world. The high degree of veneration and esteem in which the church of Jerusalem was held among all other Christian societies, on account of its rank among the apostolical churches, and its title to the appellation of *mother church*, as having succeeded the first Christian assembly founded by the apostles, was extremely favourable to the ambition of Juvenal, and rendered his project much more practicable than it would otherwise have been. Encouraged by this, and animated by the favour and protection of Theodosius the younger, the aspiring prelate not only assumed the dignity of patriarch of all Palestine,^q a rank that rendered him supreme and independent of all spiritual authority, but also invaded the rights of the bishop of Antioch, and usurped his jurisdiction over the provinces of Phenicia and Arabia. Hence there arose a warm contest between Juvenal and Maximus, bishop of Antioch, which the council of Chalcedon decided by restoring to the latter the provinces of Phenicia and Arabia, and confirming the former in the spiritual possession of all Palestine,^r and in the high rank which he

The ambition
of Juvenal.

^o Le Quien, *Oriens Christ.* tom. i. p. 36.

^p See Bayle's *Dictionary* in English, at the article Acacius.

^q By all Palestine, the reader is desired to understand three distinct provinces, of which each bore the name of Palestine, and accordingly the original is thus expressed, *Trium Palæstinarum Episcopum seu Patriarcham*. After the destruction of Jerusalem, the face of Palestine was almost totally changed, and it was so parcelled out and wasted by a succession of wars and invasions, that it preserved scarcely any trace of its former condition. Under the Christian emperors there were three Palestines formed out of the ancient country of that name, each of which was an episcopal see. And it was of these three dioceses, that Juvenal usurped and maintained the jurisdiction. See for a further account of the three Palestines, Spanhemii *Geographia Sacra*, opp. tom i. p. 79.

^r See also, for an account of the three Palestines, Caroli a S. Paulo *Geographia Sacra*, p. 307.

had assumed in the church.^s By this means there were created in this century five superior rulers of the church, who were distinguished from the rest by the title of patriarchs.^t The oriental historians mention a sixth, viz. the bishop of Seleucia and Ctesiphon, to whom, according to their account, the bishop of Antioch voluntarily ceded a part of his jurisdiction.^u But this addition to the number of the patriarchs is unworthy of credit, as the only proof of it is drawn from the Arabic *laws* of the council of Nice, which are notoriously destitute of all authority.

III. The patriarchs were distinguished by considerable and extensive rights and privileges that were annexed to their high station. They alone consecrated the bishops, who lived in the provinces that belonged to their jurisdiction. They assembled yearly, in council, the clergy of their respective districts, in order to regulate the affairs of the church. The cognisance of all important causes, and the determination of the more weighty controversies, were referred to the patriarch of the province where they arose. They also pronounced a decisive judgment in those cases where accusations were brought against bishops. And, lastly, they appointed *vicars*,^w or deputies, clothed with their authority, for the preservation of order and tranquillity in the remoter provinces. Such were the great and distinguishing privileges of the patriarchs; and they were accompanied with others of less moment, which it is needless to mention.

It must, however, be carefully observed, that the authority of the patriarchs was not acknowledged through all the provinces without exception. Several districts, both in the eastern and western empires, were exempted from their jurisdiction.^x The emperors who reserved to themselves the *supreme* power in the Christian hierarchy, and received, with great facility and readiness, the complaints of those who considered themselves as injured by the patriarchs; the councils also, in which the majesty and legis-

^s See Mich. le Quien, *Oriens Christianus*, tom. iii. p. 110.

^t See the authors who have written concerning the patriarchs, which are mentioned and recommended by the learned Fabricius, in his *Bibliograph. Antiquar.* cap. xiii. p. 453.

^u Assemani *Eiblioth. Orient. Vatican.* tom. i. p. 9, 13, &c.

^w Dav. Blondel. *De la Primaute de l'Eglise*, chap. xxv. p. 332. Theod. Ruinart. *De pallio Archi Episcopali*, p. 445, tom. ii. of the posthumous works of Mabillon.

^x Edward Brerewodius, *Dissert. de veteris Ecclesie gubernatione Patriarchali*; which is printed at the end of archbishop Usher's book, entitled *Opusculum de origine Episcoporum et Metropolitan.*

lative power of the church immediately resided; all these were so many obstacles to the arbitrary proceedings of the patriarchal order.

IV. This constitution of ecclesiastical government was so far from contributing to the peace and prosperity of the Christian church, that it proved, on the contrary, a perpetual source of dissensions and animosities, and was productive of various inconveniences and grievances. The patriarchs, who, The inconveniences that accompanied the patriarchal authority and government by their exalted rank and extensive authority, were equally able to do much good and much mischief, began to encroach upon the rights, and to trample upon the prerogatives of their bishops, and thus introduced, gradually, a sort of spiritual bondage into the church. And that they might invade, without opposition, the rights of the bishops, they permitted the bishops, in their turn, to trample with impunity upon the ancient rights and privileges of the people. For, in proportion as the bishops multiplied their privileges and extended their usurpations, the patriarchs gained new accessions of power by the despotism which they exercised over the Episcopal order. They fomented also divisions among the bishops, and excited animosities between the bishops and the other ministers of the church; nay, they went still further, and sowed the seeds of discord between the clergy and the people, that all these combustions might furnish them with perpetual matter for the exercise of their authority, and procure them a multitude of clients and dependents. They left no artifice unemploy'd to strengthen their own authority, and to raise opposition against the bishops from every quarter. For this purpose it was that they engaged in their cause by the most alluring promises, and attached to their interests by the most magnificent acts of liberality, whole swarms of monks, who served as intestine enemies to the bishops, and as a dead weight on the side of patriarchal tyranny. These monastic hirelings contributed more than any thing else to ruin the ancient ecclesiastical discipline, to diminish the authority of the bishops, and raise to an enormous and excessive height, the power and prerogatives of their insolent and ambitious patrons.

V. To these lamentable evils were added the ambitious

The contentions of the patriarchs.

quarrels, and the bitter animosities that rose among the patriarchs themselves, and which produced the most bloody wars, and the most detestable and horrid crimes. The patriarch of Constantinople distinguished himself in these odious contests. Elated with the favour and proximity of the imperial court, he cast a haughty eye on all sides where any objects were to be found on which he might exercise his lordly ambition. On the one hand, he reduced under his jurisdiction the patriarchs of Alexandria and Antioch, as prelates only of the second order; and, on the other, he invaded the diocese of the Roman pontiff, and spoiled him of several provinces. The two former prelates, though they struggled with vehemence, and raised considerable tumults by their opposition, yet they struggled ineffectually, both for want of strength, and likewise on account of a variety of unfavourable circumstances. But the Roman pontiff, far superior to them in wealth and power, contended also with more vigour and obstinacy, and, in his turn, gave a deadly wound to the usurped supremacy of the Byzantine patriarch.

The attentive inquirer into the affairs of the church from this period, will find, in the events now mentioned, the principal source of those most scandalous and deplorable dissensions which divided, first, the eastern church into various sects, and afterwards separated it entirely from that of the west. He will find that these ignominious schisms flowed chiefly from the unchristian contentions for dominion and supremacy, which reigned among those who set themselves up for the fathers and defenders of the church.

VI. None of the contending bishops found the occurrences of the times so favourable to his ambition as the Roman pontiff. Notwithstanding the redoubled efforts of the bishop of Constantinople, a variety of circumstances united in augmenting his power and authority, though he had not, as yet, assumed the dignity of supreme lawgiver and judge of the whole Christian church. The bishops of Alexandria and Antioch, unable to make head against the lordly prelate of Constantinople, fled often to the Roman pontiff for succour against his violence; and the inferior order of bishops used the same method when their rights were invaded by the prelates of Alexandria and Antioch. So that the bishop of Rome, by taking all these prelates alternately under his protection,

The power of the bishop of Rome.

daily added new degrees of influence and authority to the Roman see, rendered it every where respected, and was thus imperceptibly establishing its supremacy. Such were the means by which the Roman pontiff extended his dominion in the east. In the west its increase was owing to other causes. The declining power and the supine indolence of the emperors, left the authority of the bishop who presided in their imperial city almost without control. The incursions, moreover, and triumphs of the barbarians, were so far from being prejudicial to his rising dominion, that they rather contributed to its advancement. For the kings, who penetrated into the empire, were only solicitous about the methods of giving a sufficient degree of stability to their respective governments. And when they perceived the subjection of the multitude to the bishops, and the dependence of the bishops upon the Roman pontiff, they immediately resolved to reconcile this ghostly ruler to their interests, by loading him with benefits and honours of various kinds.

Among all the prelates who ruled the church of Rome during this century, there was none who asserted, with such vigour and success, the authority and pretensions of the Roman pontiff, as Leo, commonly surnamed the Great. It must be however observed, that neither he, nor the other promoters of that cause, were able to overcome all the obstacles that were laid in their way, nor the various checks which were given to their ambition. Many examples might be alleged in proof of this point, particularly the case of the Africans, whom no threats nor promises could engage to submit the decision of their controversies, and the determination of their causes, to the Roman tribunal.^y

VII. The vices of the clergy were now carried to the most enormous lengths; and all the writers of this century, whose probity and virtue render them The vices of the clergy. worthy of credit, are unanimous in their accounts of the luxury, arrogance, avarice, and voluptuousness of the sacerdotal orders. The *bishops*, and particularly those of the first rank, created various delegates, or ministers who managed for them the affairs of their diocesses, and a sort of courts were gradually formed, where these pompous ecclesiastics gave audience, and received the homage of a crin-

^y Lud. El. Du Pin. *De antiqua Ecclesiæ Disciplina*, Diss. ii. p. 166. Melch. Leydeckeri, *Historia Eccles. Africanæ*, tom. ii. Diss. ii. p. 505.

ging multitude. The office of a *presbyter* was looked upon of such a high and eminent nature, that Martin, bishop of Tours, was so audacious as to maintain, at a public entertainment, that the emperor was inferior in dignity to one of that order.^z As to the *deacons*, their pride and licentiousness occasioned many and grievous complaints, as appears from the decrees of several councils.^a

These opprobrious stains, in the characters of the clergy, would never have been endured, had not the greatest part of mankind been sunk in superstition and ignorance, and all in general formed their ideas of the rights and liberties of Christian ministers from the model exhibited by the sacerdotal orders among the Hebrews, the Greeks, and Romans, during the law of Moses, and the darkness of paganism. The barbarous nations, also, those fierce and warlike Germans, who, after the defeat of the Romans, divided among them the western empire, bore, with the utmost patience and moderation, both the dominion and vices of the bishops and priests, because, upon their conversion to Christianity, they became naturally subject to their jurisdiction; and still more, because they looked upon the ministers of Christ as invested with the same rights and privileges which distinguished the priests of their fictitious deities.

VIII. The corruption of that order who were appointed to promote, by their doctrine and examples, the sacred interests of piety and virtue, will appear less surprising when we consider, that multitudes of people of all kinds were every where admitted, without examination and without choice, into the body of the clergy, the greatest part of whom had no other view, than the enjoyment of a lazy and inglorious repose. Many of these ecclesiastics were confined to no fixed places or assemblies, had no employment of any kind, but sauntered about wherever they pleased, gaining their maintenance by imposing upon the ignorant multitude, and sometimes by mean and dishonest practices.

But if any should ask, how this account is reconcilable with the number of saints, who, according to the testimonies of both the eastern and western writers, are said to have shone forth in this century, the answer is obvious;

^z Sulpitius Severus, *De vita Martini*, cap. xx. p. 339, compared with *Dialog.* ii. cap. vi. p. 457.

^a See Dav. Blondel *Apologia pro sententia Hieronimi de Episcopis et Presbyteris*, p. 740.

these saints were canonized by the ignorance of the times. For, in an age of darkness and corruption, those who distinguished themselves from the multitude, either by their genius, their writings, or their eloquence, by their prudence and dexterity in managing matters of importance, or by their meekness and moderation, and the ascendancy they had gained over their resentments and passions; all such were esteemed something more than men; they were revered as gods; or, to speak more properly, they appeared to others as men divinely inspired, and full of the Deity.

ix. The monks, who had formerly lived only for themselves, in solitary retreats, and had never thought of assuming any rank among the sacerdotal order, The Monks. were now gradually distinguished from the populace, and were endowed with such opulence and such honourable privileges, that they found themselves in a condition to claim an eminent station among the supports and pillars of the Christian community.^b The fame of their piety and sanctity was at first so great, that bishops and presbyters were often chosen out of their order,^c and the passion of erecting edifices and convents, in which the monks and holy virgins might serve God in the most commodious manner, was at this time carried beyond all bounds.^d

The monastic orders did not all observe the same rule of discipline, nor the same manner of living. Some followed the rule of Augustine, others that of Basil, others that of Antony, others that of Athanasius, others that of Pachomius; but they must all have become extremely negligent and remiss in observing the laws of their respective orders, since the licentiousness of the monks, even in this century, was become a proverb,^e and they are said to have excited the most dreadful tumults and seditions in various places. All the monastic orders of all sorts were under the protection of the bishops in whose provinces they lived, nor did the patriarchs claim any authority over them, as appears with the utmost evidence from the decrees of the councils held in this century.^f

^b Epiphanius, *Exposit. fidei*, tom. i. opp. p. 1094. Mabillon, *Reponse aux Chanoines Reguliers*, tom. ii. of his posthumous works, p. 115.

^c See Sulpitius Severus, *De vita Martini*, cap. x. 320. *Dial.* i. cap. xxi. p. 426.

^d Sulpitius Severus, *Dial.* i. p. 419. Norisius, *Histor. Pelag.* lib. i. cap. iii. p. 273, tom. i. opp. *Histoire Littéraire de la France*, tom. ii. p. 35.

^e Sulp. Severus, *Dial.* i. cap. viii. p. 399.

^f See Jo. Launoii *Inquisitio in chartam immunitatis B. Germani*, opp. tom. iii. part. ii.

x. Several writers of considerable merit adorned this century. Among the Greek writers. Greeks and orientals the first place is due to Cyril, bishop of Alexandria, so famous for his learned productions, and the various controversies in which he was engaged. It would be unjust to derogate from the praises which are due to this eminent man; but it would betray, on the other hand, a criminal partiality, did we pass uncensured the turbulent spirit, the litigious and contentious temper, and the other defects which are laid to his charge.^g

After Cyril, we may place Theodoret, bishop of Cyprus, an eloquent, copious, and learned writer, eminent for his acquaintance with all the branches of sacred erudition, but unfortunate in his attachment to some of the Nestorian errors.^h

Isidore of Pelusium was a man of uncommon learning and sanctity. A great numberⁱ of his epistles are yet extant, and discover more piety, genius, erudition, and wisdom, than are to be found in the voluminous productions of many other writers.^k

Theophilus, bishop of Alexandria, few of whose writings are now extant, acquired an immortal name by his violent opposition to Origen and his followers.^l

Palladius deserves a rank among the better sort of authors, by his *Lausiac History*, and his *Life of Chrysostom*.

Theodore of Mopsuestia, though accused after his death of the greatest errors, was one of the most learned men of his time. Those who have read, with any attention, the fragments of his writings which are to be found in Photius, will lament the want of these excellent compositions, which

p. 3. In the ancient records, posterior to this century, the monks are frequently called clerks. See Mabillon. *Præf. ad Sæc. ii. Actor. Sanctor. Ord. Benedicti*, p. 14. And this shows that they now began to be ranked among the clergy, or ministers of the church.

g The works of Cyril, in six volumes folio, were published at Paris, by Aubert, in the year 1638.

h The Jesuit Sirmond gave at Paris, in the year 1642, a noble edition of the works of this prelate in four volumes folio; a fifth was added by Garnier, in 1685. [] We must observe in favour of this excellent ecclesiastic, so renowned for the sanctity and simplicity of his manners, that he abandoned the doctrines of Nestorius, and thus effaced the stain he had contracted by his personal attachment to that heretic, and to John of Antioch.

[] i The number of these epistles amounts to 2012, which are divided into five books. They are short, but admirably written, and are equally recommendable for the solidity of the matter, and the purity and elegance of their style.

k The best edition of Isidore's Epistles is that which was published in folio, by the Jesuit Scott, at Paris, in 1638.

l See Euseb. Renaudotus, *Hist. Patriarchar. Alexandrinor.* p. 163.

are either entirely lost, or, if any remain,^m are only extant among the Nestorians, and that in the Syriac language.ⁿ

Nilus, disciple of Chrysostom, composed several treatises of a practical and pious kind; but these performances derive more merit from the worthy and laudable intention of their author than from any other circumstance.

We pass over in silence Basilius of Seleucia; Theodotus of Ancyra; and Gelasis of Cyzicum, for the sake of brevity.

XI. A Roman pontiff, Leo I. surnamed the Great, shines forth at the head of the Latin writers of this century. He was a man of uncommon genius and eloquence, which he employed however too much in extending his authority; a point in which his ambition was both indefatigable and excessive.^o

The Latin
writers.

Orosius acquired a considerable degree of reputation by the *History* he wrote to refute the cavils of the pagans against Christianity, and by his books against the Pelagians and Priscillianists.^p

Cassian, an illiterate and superstitious man, inculcated in Gaul, both by his discourse and his writings, the discipline and manner of living which prevailed among the Syrian and Egyptian monks, and was a sort of teacher to those who were called Semipelagians.^q

Maximus of Turin published several *Homilies*, which are yet extant; and though short, are, for the most part commendable, both for their elegance and piety.

Eucherius of Lyons, and bishop of that city, was one of the most considerable moral writers that flourished among the Latins in this century.^r

^m See Jos. Simon Assemani *Biblioth. Oriental. Clement. Vatic.* tom. iii. part ii. p. 227.

ⁿ It appears, by this account of the works of Theodore, that Dr. Mosheim had not seen the *Dissertations* of the late duke of Orleans, in one of which, that learned prince has demonstrated that the *Commentary upon the Psalms*, which is to be found in the *Chain* or *Collection of Corderius*, and which bears the name of Theodore, is the production of Theodore of Mopsuestia. There exists, also, beside the fragments that are to be found in Photius, a manuscript commentary of this illustrious author upon the twelve minor prophets.

^o All the works of Leo were published at Lyons, in two volumes folio, in the year 1700, by the care of the celebrated Quesnel of the oratory.

^p See Bayle's *Dictionary*, at the article Orosius. A valuable edition of this author, enriched with ancient coins and medals, was published in 4to. at Leyden, in the year 1738, by the learned Havercamp.

^q *Histoire Littéraire de la France*, tom. ii. p. 215. Simon, *Critique de la Biblioth. Ecclésiastique* par Du Pin, tom. i. p. 156. The works of Cassian were published in folio at Frankfort, in the year 1722, with a large commentary by Alardus Gazæus.

^r See a large account of this prelate, in the *Histoire Littéraire de la France*, tom. ii. p. 275.

Pontius of Nola,^s distinguished by his eminent and fervent piety, is also esteemed for his poems and other good performances.

Peter, bishop of Ravenna, obtained by his eloquence, the title of Chrysologus; nor are his discourses entirely destitute of genius.¹

Salvian was an eloquent, but at the same time, a melancholy and sour writer, who, in his vehement declamations against the vices of his times, unwarily discovers the defects of his own character.²

Prosper of Aquitain and Marius Mercator are abundantly known to such as have employed any part of their time and attention in the study of the Pelagian disputes, and the other controversies that were managed in this century.

Vincent of Lerins gained a lasting reputation by his short, but excellent treatise against the sects, entitled *Commonitorium*.³

Sidonius Apollinaris, a tumid writer, though not entirely destitute of eloquence; Vigilius of Tapsus; Arnobius the younger, who wrote a commentary on the book of Psalms; Dracontius, and others of that class, are of too little consequence to deserve a more particular notice.

CHAPTER III.

CONCERNING THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH DURING THIS CENTURY.

MANY points of religion were more largely explained, and many of its doctrines determined with more accuracy and precision, than they had been in the preceding ages. This was owing to the contro-

¹ Many points of religion determined.

^s This pious and ingenious ecclesiastic is more generally known by the name of Paulin. See *Histoire Littéraire de la France*, tom. ii. p. 179. The best edition of his works is that published by Le Brun, at Paris, in the year 1685, in two volumes 4to.

^t Agnelli *Liber Pontificalis Ecclesiæ Ravennatensis*, tom. i. p. 321.

^u *Hist. Liter. de la France*, tom. ii. p. 517. ¹ The authors of the history here referred to, give a different account of Salvian's character. They acknowledge, that his declamations against the vices of the age, in his *Treatise against Avarice*, and his *Discourse concerning Providence*, are warm and vehement; but they represent him notwithstanding as one of the most humane and benevolent men of his time. It is, however, beyond all doubt that he was extravagantly austere in the rules he prescribed for the conduct of life. For what is more unnatural than to recommend to Christians, as a necessary condition of salvation, the leaving their whole substance to the poor, to the utter ruin of their children and relations? It must, however, be confessed, that his austerity in point of discipline was accompanied with the most amiable moderation toward those who differed from him in articles of faith. There is a most remarkable passage to this purpose, in his *Treatise concerning Providence*, book v. p. 100.

^w This work of Vincent, which is commended by our author, seems scarcely worthy of such applause. I see nothing in it, but that blind veneration for ancient opi-

versies that were multiplied at this time throughout the Christian world, concerning the *person and nature of Christ*; the *innate corruption and depravity of man*; the *natural ability of men to live according to the dictates of the divine law*; the *necessity of the divine grace in order to salvation*; the *nature and existence of human liberty*; and other such intricate and perplexing questions. The sacred and venerable simplicity of the primitive times, which required no more than a true faith in the word of God, and a sincere obedience to his holy laws, appeared little better than rusticity and ignorance to the subtile doctors of this quibbling age. Yet so it happened, that many of the over curious divines, who attempted to explain the nature and remove the difficulties of these intricate doctrines, succeeded very ill in this matter. Instead of leading men into the paths of humble faith and genuine piety, they bewildered them in the labyrinths of controversy and contention, and rather darkened than illustrated the sacred mysteries of religion by a thick cloud of unintelligible subtilties, ambiguous terms, and obscure distinctions. Hence arose new matter of animosity and dispute, of bigotry and uncharitableness, which flowed like a torrent through succeeding ages, and which all human efforts seem unable to vanquish. In these disputes, the heat of passion, and the excessive force of religious antipathy and contradiction, hurried frequently the contending parties into the most dangerous extremes.

II. If before this time the lustre of religion was clouded with superstition, and its divine precepts adulterated with a mixture of human inventions, this evil, Superstition grows apace. instead of diminishing, increased daily. The happy souls of departed Christians were invoked by numbers, and their aid implored by assiduous and fervent prayers; while none stood up to censure or oppose this preposterous worship. The question, how the prayers of mortals ascended to the celestial spirits, a question which afterward produced much wrangling and many idle fancies, did not as yet occasion any difficulty. For the Christians of this century did not imagine that the souls of the saints were so entirely confined to the celestial mansions, as to be deprived of the privilege of visiting mortals, and travelling, when they pleased,

nions, which is so fatal to the discovery and progress of truth, and an attempt to prove that nothing but the voice of tradition is to be consulted in fixing the sense of the Holy Scriptures. An ample account of Vincent, Prosper, and Arnobius, is to be found in the *Histoire Littéraire de la France*, tom. ii. p. 305, 342, 369.

through various countries. They were further of opinion, that the places most frequented by departed spirits were those where the bodies they had formerly animated were interred; and this opinion, which the Christians borrowed from the Greeks and Romans, rendered the sepulchres of the saints the general rendezvous of suppliant multitudes.^x The images of those who, during their lives, had acquired the reputation of uncommon sanctity, were now honoured with a particular worship in several places; and many imagined that this worship drew down into the images the propitious presence of the saints or celestial beings they represented; deluded, perhaps, into this idle fancy, by the crafty fictions of the heathen priests, who had published the same thing concerning the statues of Jupiter and Mercury.^y A singular and irresistible efficacy was also attributed to the bones of martyrs, and to the figure of the cross, in defeating the attempts of Satan, removing all sorts of calamities, and in healing not only the diseases of the body, but also those of the mind.^z We shall not enter here into a particular account of the public supplications, the holy pilgrimages, the superstitious services paid to departed souls; the multiplication of temples, altars, penitential garments, and a multitude of other circumstances, that showed the decline of genuine piety, and the corrupt darkness that was eclipsing the lustre of primitive Christianity. As there were none in these times to hinder the Christians from retaining the opinions of their pagan ancestors concerning departed souls, heroes, demons, temples, and such like matters, and even transferring them into their religious services; and as, instead of entirely abolishing the rites and institutions of ancient times, these institutions were still observed with only some slight alterations; all this swelled of necessity the torrent of superstition, and deformed the beauty of the Christian religion and worship with those corrupt remains of paganism, which still subsist in a certain church.

It will not be improper to observe here, that the famous pagan doctrine, concerning the *purification of departed souls*,

x Lactantius, *Divinar. Institutionem*, lib. i. p. 164. Hesiodus, *Opp. et Dier.* ver. 122. Compare with these, Sulpitius Severus, *Epist.* ii. p. 371. *Dial.* ii. cap. xiii. p. 474. *Dial.* iii. p. 512. Æneas Gazæus, in *Theophrasto*, p. 65. Macarius in Jac. Tollii *Insignibus Itineris Italici*, p. 197. and other writers of this age.

y Clementina, *Homil.* x. p. 697, tom. i. *PP. Apostolic.* Arnobius, *adv. Gentes*, lib. vi. p. 254. Casp. Barthius, *ad Rutilium Numantian*, p. 250.

z Prudentius, *Hymn.* xi. *de Coronis*, p. 150, 151. Sulpitius Severus, *Ep.* i. p. 364. Æneas Gazæus, in *Theophrasto*, p. 173.

by means of a certain kind of *fire*, was more amply explained and confirmed now than it had formerly been." Every body knows, that this doctrine proved an inexhaustible source of riches to the clergy through the succeeding ages, and that it still enriches the Romish church with its nutritious streams.

III. The interpretation of the holy Scriptures employed fewer pens in this century than in the preceding age, in which the Christian doctors were less involved in the labyrinths of controversy. Yet, notwithstanding the multiplication of religious disputes, a considerable number of learned men undertook this useful and important task. We shall not mention those who confined their illustrations to some one or a few books of the divine word, such as Victor of Antioch, Polychronius, Philo Carpathius, Isidore of Cordona, Salonius, and Andrew of Cæsarea. We must not, however, pass over in silence Theodoret and Theodore, bishops of Cyprus and Mopsuestia, the two most famous expositors of this age, who illustrated a great part of the holy Scriptures by their pious labours. They were truly eminent both in point of learning and genius; and free and unprejudiced in their search after truth, they followed the explications of Scripture given by their predecessors, only as far as they found them agreeable to reason. The commentaries of Theodoret are yet extant, and in the hands of the learned;^b those of Theodore are concealed in the east among the Nestorians, though on many accounts worthy to see the light. Cyril of Alexandria, deserves also a place among the commentators of this century; but a still higher rank, among that useful and learned body, is due to Isidore of Pelusium, whose epistles contain many observations, which cast a considerable degree of light upon several parts of Scripture.^d

Interpreta-
tions of scrip-
ture.

a See particularly concerning this matter, Augustin, his book *de viii. Quæstionibus ad Dulcitium*, N. xiii. tom. vi. opp. p. 128. *De fide et operibus*, cap. xvi. p. 182. *De fide, spe, et charitate*, § 118, p. 222. *Enarratione Psal. xxxv.* § 3, &c.

b See Simon, *Histoire critique des principaux Commentateurs de N. Test.* ch. xxii. p. 314; as also his *Critique de la Biblioth. Ecclesiast. de Du Pin*, tom. i. p. 180. ¶ Theodoret wrote commentaries upon the five books of *Moses, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, the Psalms, the Canticles, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Baruch, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, the twelve lesser prophets, and St. Paul's fourteen Epistles.*

c Jos. Sim. Asseman. *Biblioth. Orient. Clem.* tom. iii. § 2, p. 227. Simon, *Critique de la Biblioth. Eccles. de Du Pin*, tom. i. p. 108, 677. ¶ We are assured by Fabricius, upon the testimony of Lambecius, that Theodore's Commentary upon the *twelve prophets* is still in being, in MS. in the emperor's library at Vienna. See *Fabr. Bibl. Græc.* tom. ix. p. 162. See also, for an ample and learned account of the writings of this author, Lardner's *Credibility*, &c. vol. ix. p. 389.

d See for an account of these two authors, Simon, *Histoire des Principaux Commentateurs du Nouveau Testament*, chap. xxi. p. 300.

iv. It is however to be lamented, that the greatest part of the commentators, both Greek and Latin, following the idle fancies of Origen, overlooked the true and natural sense of the words, and hunted after subtle and hidden significations, for *mysteries*, as the Latins then termed them, in the plainest precepts of the holy Scriptures. Several of the Greeks, and particularly Theodoret, laboured with success and precision, in illustrating the books of the New Testament; and their success here is to be principally attributed to their perfect knowledge of the Greek language, which they had learned from their infancy. But neither the Greeks nor Latins cast much light upon the Old Testament, which was cruelly tortured by the allegorical pens of almost all who attempted to illustrate and explain it. For nothing is more common, than to see the interpreters of the fifth century straining all the passages of that sacred book either to typify Christ, and the blessings of his kingdom, or antichrist, and the wars and desolations which he was to bring upon the earth, and that, without the least spark of judgment, or the smallest air of probability.

v. A few chosen spirits, superior to the others in sagacity and wisdom, were bold enough to stand up against these critical delusions, and to point out a safer and plainer way to divine truth. This we learn from the epistles of Isidore of Pelusium, who, though he was not himself entirely free from this allegorical contagion, yet censures judiciously in many places, those that abandoned the historical sense of the Old Testament, and applied, universally, all its narrations and predictions to Christ alone. But none went greater lengths in censuring the fanciful followers of Origen, than Theodore of Mopsuestia, who not only wrote *a book concerning allegory and history against Origen*,^e but also in his *commentary on the prophets*, did not hesitate to apply the most of their predictions to various events in ancient history.^f This manner of interpreting Scripture was very ill received, and contributed perhaps more to raise the general cry against him, than all the erroneous doctrines with which he was charged.^g The

^e Facundus Hermianensis, *De tribus Capitulis*, lib. iii. cap. vi. Liberatus in *Breviario*, cap. xxiv.

^f *Acta Concilii Constantinopol. II. seu Œcumenici V.* tom. iii. *Conciliorum*, p. 58, edit. Harduini.

^g Theodore, after his death, was considered as the parent of the Pelagian and

Nestorians followed the example of this remarkable and eminent man;^b and still continue to consider him as a saint of the first order, and to preserve his writings with the utmost care, as precious monuments of his piety and learning.

VI. The doctrines of religion were at this time understood and represented in a manner that savoured little of their native purity and simplicity. They Dialectic theology. were drawn out by laboured commentaries beyond the terms in which the divine wisdom had thought fit to reveal them; and were examined with that minuteness and subtilty that were only proper to cover them with obscurity. And what was still worse, the theological notions that generally prevailed, were proved rather by the authorities and logical discussions of the ancient doctors, than by the unerring dictates of the divine word. It does not appear that in this century any attempted to form a complete system of theology, unless we give that title to *six books of instruction*, which Nicaeas is said to have composed for the use of the Neophytes.ⁱ But as we have already observed, the principal branches of religion were laboriously explained in the various books that were written against the Nestorians, Eutychians, Pelagians, and Arians.

VII. The number of those who disputed in this century against paganism and infidelity, was very considerable, yet not greater than the exigency of the times, and the frequent attacks made upon Christianity rendered necessary. Theodoret, in his ingenious and learned treatise, *De curandis Græcorum affectionibus*, Orientius, in his *Commonitorium*, and Evagrius, in his *dispute between Zachaeus and Apollonius*, opposed with fortitude and vigour those that worshipped images, and offered their religious services to the pagan deities.^k To these we may add Philip Sedetes and Philostorgius, of whom the latter attacked Porphyry, and the former Julian. Ba-

The managers of the controversy against the Jews, pagans, and sectaries.

Nestorian heresies; though, during his life, he was held in the highest esteem, and died in the communion of the church.

^h This appears by the testimony of Cosmas Indicopleustes, a writer of the sixth century, was undoubtedly a Nestorian. For this author, in the fifth book of his *Christian Topography*, which Montfaucon published in his new collection of the Greek fathers, maintains, that of all the Psalms of David, four only are applicable to Christ. And to confirm this his opinion, he affirms boldly, that the writers of the New Testament, when they apply to Jesus the prophecies of the Old, do this rather by a mere accommodation of the words, without any regard to their true and genuine sense.

ⁱ Gennadius Massiliensis, *De Scriptor. Ecclesiast.* cap. xxii. p. 28, edit. Fabric.

^k See, for an account of Orientius and Evagrius, *Histoire Littéraire de la France*, tom. ii. p. 121, and 252.

silius of Seleucia ; Gregentius, in his *Controversy with Herbanus* ; and Evagrius, in his *Dialogue between Theophilus and Judæus*, exposed and refuted the errors and cavils of the Jews. Voconius the African ; Syagrius, in his *Book concerning Faith* ; Gennadius of Marseilles, who deserves to be placed in the first rank ; and Theodoret, in his *Treatise concerning the Fables of the Heretics*, opposed all the different sects ; not to mention those who wrote only against the errors of one or other particular party.

VIII. Those who disputed against the Christian sects observed a most absurd and vicious method of controversy. They proceeded rather according to the rules of the ancient sophists, and what is still more surprising, according to the spirit of the *Roman law*, than by the examples and instructions of Christ and his apostles. In the Roman courts, matters of a difficult and doubtful nature were decided by the authority of certain aged lawyers, who were distinguished by their abilities and experience. And when they happened to differ in opinion, the point was determined either by a plurality of voices, or by the sentiments of the more learned and illustrious members of that venerable body.¹ This procedure of the Roman tribunals was, in this century, admitted as a standing law, both in the deliberations and councils, and in the management of religious controversy, to the great and unspeakable detriment of truth. For by this, reason and even common sense were, in some measure, excluded from every question ; and that was determined as *right* and *true*, which appeared such to the greatest number, or had been approved by doctors of the greatest note in preceding times. The *acts* of the various *councils*, which are yet extant, manifestly show that this was the case. And this circumstance, combined with what we have already observed with respect to the disputants of the age now under consideration, make it easy for us to imagine the various defects that must have prevailed in the methods of defending truth, and opposing error.

IX. This absurd imitation of the Roman law in the management of religious controversy, this preposterous method of deciding truth by human authorities, were fruitful sources of spurious and suppositious

The defects of these disputants.

Spurious writings.

¹ See the *Codex Theodos.* lib. i. tit. iv. *De responsis prudentum*, p. 32. edit. Ritteriana

productions. For many audacious impostors were hence encouraged to publish their own writings under the names of ancient Christian worthies, nay, under the sacred names of even Christ himself and his holy apostles; that thus in the deliberations of councils, and in the course of controversy, they might have authorities to oppose to authorities in defence of their respective opinions. The whole Christian church was, in this century, overwhelmed with these infamous cheats, these spurious productions. This is said to have engaged Gelasius, the Roman pontiff, to call together a council, composed of the bishops of the Latin church, in which assembly, after a strict examination of those writings which appeared under great and venerable names, the famous decree passed, that deprived so many *apocryphal* books of their borrowed authority. That something of this kind really happened, it would be, perhaps, an instance of temerity to deny; but many learned men assert that the decree attributed to Gelasius labours under the same inconveniency with the books which it condemns, and was by no means the production of that pontiff, but of some deceiver who usurped, clandestinely, his name and authority.^m

x. Eucherius, Salvian, and Nilus, shine with a superior lustre among the moral writers of this century. The epistle of Eucherius *concerning the contempt* Moral writers. *of the world and the secular philosophy*, is an excellent performance both in point of matter and style. The works of Mark the hermit breathe a spirit of fervent piety, but are highly defective in many respects. The matter is ill chosen, and it is treated without order, perspicuity, or force of reasoning. Fastidius composed several discourses concerning moral duties, but they have not survived the ruins of time. The works that are yet extant of Diadochus, Prosper, and Severian, are extremely pleasing on account of the solidity and elegance which are to be found, for the most part, in their moral sentences, though they afford but indifferent entertainment to such as are desirous of precision, method, and sound argumentation. And indeed this want of method in the distribution and arrangement of their matter, and a constant neglect of tracing their

^m Pearsonus, *Vindiciar. Ignatianar.* part i. cap. iv. p. 189. Cave, *Hist. Liter. Scriptor. Ecclesias.* p. 260. Urb. Godofr. Siberus, *Præfat. ad Enchiridion Sexti*, p. 79.

subject to its first principles, are defects common to almost all the moral writers of this century.

XI. Had this indeed been their only defect, the candid and impartial would have supported it with patience, and attributed it charitably to the infelicity of the times. But many of the writers and teachers of this age did unspeakable injury to the cause of true piety by their crude and enthusiastic inventions. The mystics, who pretended to higher degrees of perfection than other Christians, drew every where to their party, particularly in the eastern provinces, a vast number of the ignorant and inconsiderate multitude, by the striking appearance of their austere and singular piety. It is impossible to describe the rigour and severity of the laws which these senseless fanatics imposed upon themselves, in order, as they alleged, to appease the Deity, and to deliver the *celestial spirit* from the bondage of this *mortal body*. They not only lived among the wild beasts, but also lived after the manner of these savage animals; they ran naked through the lonely deserts with a furious aspect, and with all the agitations of madness and frenzy; they prolonged the life of their emaciated bodies by the wretched nourishment of grass and wild herbs, avoided the sight and conversation of men, remained motionless in certain places for several years, exposed to the rigour and inclemency of the seasons, and toward the conclusion of their lives shut themselves up in narrow and miserable huts; and all this was considered as true piety, the only acceptable method of worshipping the Deity, and rendering him propitious.ⁿ The greatest part of the mystics were led into the absurdities of this extravagant discipline, not so much by the pretended force of reason and argument, as by a natural propensity to solitude, a gloomy and melancholy cast of mind, and an implicit and blind submission to the authority and example of others. For the diseases of the mind, as well as those of the body, are generally contagious, and no pestilence spreads its infection with a more dreadful rapidity than superstition and enthusiasm. Several persons have committed to writing the precepts of this severe discipline, and reduced its absurdities into a sort of system, such as Julianus Pomerius among the Latins,^o

ⁿ See the *Pratum Spirituale* of Moschus; the *Lausiac History* of Palladius; as also Sulpitius Severus, *Dial.* i.

^o Pomerius wrote a treatise *De Vita Contemplativa*. in which the doctrines and precepts of the mystics were carefully collected.

and many among the Syrians, whose names it is needless to mention.

XII. Of all the instances of superstitious frenzy that disgraced this age, none was held in higher veneration, or excited more the wonder of the multitude, than that of a certain order of men, who were ^{The superstition of the stylites.} called stylites by the Greeks, and sancti columnares, or pillar saints, by the Latins. These were persons of a most singular and extravagant turn of mind, who stood motionless upon the tops of *pillars*, expressly raised for this exercise of their patience, and remained there for several years, amidst the admiration and applause of the stupid populace. The inventor of this strange and ridiculous discipline was Simeon, a Syrian, who began his follies by changing the agreeable employment of a shepherd, for the senseless austerities of the monkish life. But his enthusiasm carried him still greater lengths; for, in order to climb as near heaven as he could, he passed thirty-seven years of his wretched life upon five pillars of six, twelve, twenty-two, thirty-six, and forty cubits high, and thus acquired a most shining reputation, and attracted the veneration of all about him.^p Many of the inhabitants of Syria and Palestine, seduced by a false ambition, and an utter ignorance of true religion, followed the example of this fanatic, though not with the same degree of austerity.^q And what is almost incredible, this superstitious practice continued in vogue until the twelfth century, when, however, it was at length totally suppressed.^r

The Latins had too much wisdom and prudence to imitate the Syrians and orientals in this whimsical superstition.

^p See the *Acta Sanctorum Mensis Januarii*, tom. i. p. 261—277, where the reader will find the account we have given of this whimsical discipline. Theodoret, indeed, had before given several hints of it, alleging, among other things, that Simeon had gradually added to the height of his pillar, with a design to approach by this means nearer to heaven. See Tillemont, *Memoires pour servir a l'Histoire de l'Eglise*, tom. xv. p. 347, edit. Paris. See also the *Acts of Simeon the stylite*, in Steph. Euodii Assemani *Actis Martyrum, Orient. et Occident.* vol. ii. p. 227, published at Rome, in folio, in the year 1748.

^q The learned Frederic Spanheim, in his *Ecclesiastical History*, p. 1154, speaks of a second Simeon the stylite, mentioned by Evagrius, *Hist. lib. vi. cap. xxiii.* who lived in the sixth century. This second fanatic seems to have carried his austerities still further than the chief of the sect; for he remained upon his pillar sixty-eight years, and from thence, like the first Simeon, he taught or rather deluded the gazing multitude, de-claimed against heresy, pretended to cast out devils, to heal diseases, and to foretell future events.

^r See Urb. Godofr. Siberi *Diss. de Sanctis Columnaribus.* Caroli Majelli *Diss. de stylitis*, published in Assemani *Acta Martyr. Orient. et Occident.* tom. ii. p. 246, where may be seen a copperplate print of Simeon's pillar.

And when a certain fanatic or impostor, named Wulfilaius, erected one of these pillars in the country of Treves, and proposed living upon it after the manner of Simeon; the neighbouring bishops ordered it to be pulled down, and thus nipped this species of superstition in the bud.^s

XIII. The mystic rules of discipline and manners had a bad effect upon the moral writers, and those who were set apart for the instruction of Christians. Thus, in instructing the catechumens and others, they were more diligent and zealous in inculcating a regard for the external parts of religion, and an attachment to bodily exercise, than in forming the heart and the affections to inward piety and solid virtue. Nay, they went so far as to prescribe rules of sanctity and virtue little different from the unnatural rigour and fanatical piety of the mystics. Salvian, and other celebrated writers, gave it as their opinion, that none were truly and perfectly holy, but those who abandoned all riches and honours, abstained from matrimony, banished all joy and cheerfulness from their hearts, and macerated their bodies with various sorts of torments and mortifications. And as all could not support such excessive degrees of severity, those madmen, or fanatics, whose robust constitutions and savage tempers were best adapted to this kind of life, were distinguished by the public applause, and saw their influence and authority increase daily. And thus saints started up like mushrooms in almost every place.

XIV. A small number of ecclesiastics, animated by the laudable spirit of reformation, boldly attempted to pluck up the roots of this growing superstition, and to bring back the deluded multitude from this vain and chimerical discipline to the practice of solid and genuine piety. But the votaries of superstition who were superior in number, reputation, and authority, reduced them soon to silence, and rendered their noble and pious efforts utterly ineffectual.^t We have an example of this in the case of Vigilantius, a man remarkable for his learning and eloquence, who was born in Gaul, and went from thence to Spain, where he performed the functions of a presbyter. This ecclesiastic, on his return from a voyage he had made into Palestine and Egypt, began, about the

Further defects of the public instructors, and practical writers.

The controversy between Jerome and Vigilantius.

Gregor. Turonens. *Histor. Francor.* lib. viii. cap. xv. p. 387.

Augustin complains of this in his famous epistle to Januarius. No. 119.

beginning of this century, to propagate several doctrines, and to publish repeated exhortations quite opposite to the opinions and manners of the times. Among other things, he denied that the tombs and the bones of the martyrs were to be honoured with any sort of homage or worship; and therefore censured the pilgrimages that were made to places that were reputed holy. He turned into derision the prodigies which were said to be wrought in the temples consecrated to martyrs, and condemned the custom of performing vigils in them. He asserted, and indeed with reason, that the custom of burning tapers at the tombs of the martyrs in broad day, was imprudently borrowed from the ancient superstition of the pagans. He maintained, moreover, that prayers addressed to departed saints were void of all efficacy; and treated with contempt, fasting and mortifications, the celibacy of the clergy, and the various austerities of the monastic life. And finally, he affirmed that the conduct of those who, distributing their substance among the indigent, submitted to the hardships of a voluntary poverty, or sent a part of their treasures to Jerusalem for devout purposes, had nothing in it acceptable to the Deity.

There were among the Gallic and Spanish bishops several that relished the opinions of Vigilantius. But Jerome, the great monk of the age, assailed this bold reformer of religion with such bitterness and fury, that the honest presbyter soon found that nothing but his silence could preserve his life from the intemperate rage of bigotry and superstition. This project then of reforming the corruptions which a fanatical and superstitious zeal had introduced into the church, was choked in its birth." And the name of good Vigilantius remains still in the *list of heretics*, which is acknowledged as authentic by those who, without any regard to their own judgment or the declarations of Scripture, followed blindly the decisions of antiquity.

xv. The controversies which had been raised in Egypt, concerning Origen and his doctrine, toward the conclusion of the preceding century, were now renewed at Constantinople, and carried on without either decency or prudence. The Nitrian monks, ba-

Disputes
about Origen-
ism.

u Bayle's *Dictionary*, at the article Vigilantius. Barbeyrac. *De la Morale des Peres*, p. 252. Gerhar. Jo. Vossius, *Thesibus Historico Theologicis*, p. 170. *Histoire Littéraire de la France*, tom. ii. p. 57.

nished from Egypt on account of their attachment to Origen, took refuge at Constantinople, and were treated by John Chrysostom, the bishop of that city, with clemency and benignity. This no sooner came to the knowledge of Theophilus, patriarch of Alexandria, than he formed a perfidious project against the eloquent prelate; and sent the famous Epiphanius, with several other bishops, to Constantinople, to compass his fall, and deprive him of his episcopal dignity. No time could be more favourable for the execution of this project than that in which it was formed; for Chrysostom, by his austerity, and his vehement declamations against the vices of the people, and the corrupt manners of the ladies of the court, had incurred the displeasure of many, and had also excited, in a more particular manner, the resentment and indignation of the empress Eudoxia, wife of Arcadius. This violent princess sent for Theophilus and the Egyptian bishops, who, pursuant to her orders, repaired to Constantinople; and having called a council, inquired into the religious sentiments of Chrysostom, and examined his morals, and the whole course of his conduct and conversation, with the utmost severity. This council, which was held in the suburbs of Chalcedon, in the year 403, with Theophilus at its head, declared Chrysostom unworthy of his high rank in the church, on account of the favourable manner in which he stood disposed toward Origen and his followers; and in consequence of this decree, condemned him to banishment. The people of Constantinople, who were tenderly attached to their pious and worthy bishop, rose in a tumultuous manner, and prevented the execution of this unrighteous sentence.^w When this tumult was entirely hushed, the same unrelenting judges, in order to satisfy their vindictive rage, and that of Eudoxia, renewed their sentence the year following under another pretext,^x and with more success; for the pious Chrysostom, yielding to the redoubled efforts

^w This is not quite exact. For it appears, by the accounts of the best historians, that this sentence was really executed, and that the emperor confirmed the decree of this first synod, by banishing Chrysostom into Bithynia; or, as others allege, by ordering him to retire to the country. A violent earthquake and a terrible shower of hail, which were looked upon by the multitude as judgments occasioned by the unrighteous persecution of their pious bishop, alarmed the court, and engaged them to recall Chrysostom to his office.

^x This new pretext was the indecent manner in which Chrysostom is said to have declaimed against Eudoxia, on account of her having erected her statue in silver near the church.

of his enemies, was banished to Cucusus, a city of Cilicia, where he died about three years after.^y

The exile of this illustrious man was followed by a terrible sedition of the Johannists, so his votaries were called, which was calmed, though with much difficulty, by the edicts of Arcadius.^z It is beyond all doubt that the proceedings against Chrysostom were cruel and unjust; in this however he was to blame, that he assumed the authority and rank which had been granted by the council of Constantinople to the bishops of that imperial city, and set himself up as a judge of the controversy between Theophilus and the Egyptian monks, which the Alexandrian prelate could not behold without the utmost impatience and resentment. These monks, when they lost their protector, were restored to the favour of Theophilus; but the faction of the Origenists continued, notwithstanding all this, to flourish in Egypt, Syria, and the adjacent countries, and held their chief residence at Jerusalem.

CHAPTER IV.

CONCERNING THE RITES AND CEREMONIES USED IN THE CHURCH DURING THIS CENTURY.

I. To enumerate the rites and institutions that were added, in this century, to the Christian worship, would require a volume of a considerable size. Ceremonies greatly multiplied. The *acts of councils*, and the records left us by the most celebrated ancient writers, are the sources from whence the curious may draw a satisfactory and particular account of this matter; and to these we refer such as are desirous of something more than a general view of the subject under consideration. Several of these ancient writers, uncorrupted by the contagious examples of the times in which they lived, have ingenuously acknowledged that true piety and virtue were smothered, as it were, under that enormous burden of ceremonies under which they lay groaning in this century. This evil was owing partly to the ignorance and dishonesty of the clergy; partly to the

^y See Tillemont and Hermant, who have both written the life of Chrysostom; as also Bayle's *Dictionary* in English at the article Acacius.

^z See Cyrilli *vita Sabæ* in Cotelierii *Monument. Eccles. Græc.* tom. ii. p. 274. Jos. Sim. Asseman. *Biblioth. Oriental. Vatican.* tom. ii. p. 31.

calamities of the times, which were extremely unfavourable to the pursuit of knowledge, and to the culture of the mind; and partly, indeed, to the natural depravity of imperfect mortals, who are much more disposed to worship with the eye than with the heart, and are more ready to offer to the Deity the laborious pomp of an outward service, than the nobler, yet simple oblation of pious dispositions and holy affections.

II. Divine worship was now daily rising from one degree of pomp to another, and degenerating more

A general view of the new rites introduced at this time.

and more into a gaudy spectacle, only proper to attract the stupid admiration of a gazing populace. The sacerdotal garments were embellished

with a variety of ornaments, with a view to excite in the minds of the multitude a greater veneration for the sacred order. New acts of devotion were also celebrated. In Gaul, particularly, the solemn *prayers* and *supplications*, which usually precede the anniversary of Christ's ascension, were now instituted for the first time.^a In other places perpetual acclamations of praise to God were performed both night and day by singers, who succeeded each other, so as that the service suffered no interruption;^b as if the Supreme Being took pleasure in such noisy and turbulent shouting, or received any gratification from the blandishments of men. The riches and magnificence of the churches exceeded all bounds.^c They were also adorned with costly images, among which, in consequence of the Nestorian controversy, that of the Virgin Mary holding the child Jesus in her arms, obtained the first and principal place. The altars, and the chests in which the relics were preserved, were in most places made of solid silver. And from this we may easily imagine the splendour and expenses that were lavished upon the other utensils which were employed in the service of the church.

III. On the other hand, the *agapæ*, or *feasts of charity*,

The feasts of charity.

were now suppressed, on account of the abuses to which they gave occasion, amidst the daily decline of that piety and virtue which rendered these meetings useful and edifying in the primitive ages.

^a See Sidonius Apollinaris, *Epist.* lib. v. *epist.* xvi. lib. vi. *epist.* i. as also Marten's *Thesaurus Anecdotorum*, tom. v. p. 47.

^b Gervais, *Histoire de Suger*, tom. i. p. 23.

^c See Zacharias of Mitylene, *De officio Mundi*, p. 165. 166

A new method also of proceeding with *penitents* was introduced into the Latin church. For grievous offenders, who had formerly been obliged to confess Penitents. their guilt in the face of the congregation, were now delivered from this mortifying penalty, and obtained from Leo the Great a permission to *confess* their crimes *privately* to a priest appointed for that purpose. By this change of the ancient discipline, one of the greatest restraints upon licentiousness, and the only remaining barrier of chastity, was entirely removed, and the actions of Christians were subject to no other scrutiny than that of the clergy; a change which was frequently convenient for the sinner, and also advantageous in many respects to the sacred order.

CHAPTER V.

CONCERNING THE DISSENSIONS AND HERESIES THAT TROUBLED THE CHURCH DURING THIS CENTURY.

I. SEVERAL of those sects which had divided the church in the preceding ages, renewed their efforts at this time to propagate their respective opinions, and introduced new tumults and animosities among the Christians. We shall say nothing of the Novatians, Marcionites, and Manicheans, those inauspicious and fatal names that disgrace the earlier annals of the church, though it is evident, that as yet their sects subsisted, and were even numerous in many places. We shall confine ourselves to an account of the Donatists and Arians, who were the pests of the preceding century.

The Donatists had hitherto maintained themselves with a successful obstinacy, and their affairs were in a good state. But about the beginning of this century the face of things changed much to their disadvantage by the means of St. Augustine, bishop of Hippo. The catholic bishops of Africa, animated by the exhortations and conducted by the counsels of this zealous prelate, exerted themselves with the utmost vigour in the destruction of this seditious sect, whom they justly looked upon not only as troublesome to the church by their obstinacy, but also as a nuisance to the state, by the brutal soldiery^d

^d The *Circumcelliones* already mentioned.

which they employed in their cause. Accordingly deputies were sent in the year 404, from the council of Carthage, to the emperor Honorius, to request that the laws enacted against heretics, by the preceding emperors, might have force against the Donatists, who denied that they belonged to the heretical tribe; and also to desire that bounds might be set to the barbarous fury of the Circumcelliones. The first step that the emperor took in consequence of this request, was to impose a fine upon all the Donatists who refused to return into the bosom of the church, and to send their bishops and doctors into banishment. The year following new laws, much severer than the former, were enacted against this rebellious sect under the title of *Acts of Uniformity*. And as the magistrates were remiss in the execution of them, the council of Carthage, in the year 407, sent a second time deputies to the emperor to desire that certain persons might be appointed to execute these *edicts* with vigour and impartiality; and their request was granted.

II. The faction of the Donatists, though much broke by these repeated shocks, was yet far from being totally extinguished. It recovered a part of its strength in the year 408, after Stilicho had been put to death by the order of Honorius, and gained a still further accession of vigour the year following, in which the emperor published a law in favour of liberty of conscience, and prohibited all compulsion in matters of religion. This law, however, was not of long duration. It was abrogated at the earnest and repeated solicitations of the council which was held at Carthage in the year 410; and Marcellinus the tribune was sent by Honorius into Africa, with full power to bring to a conclusion this tedious and unhappy contest. Marcellinus, therefore, held at Carthage, in the year 411, a solemn *conference*, in which he examined the cause with much attention, heard the contending parties during the space of three days, and at length pronounced sentence in favour of the catholics.^e The catholic bishops who were present

^e See Franc. Balduin, *Hist. Collationis Carthag.* in Optat. *Milev. Pinian.* p. 337. It is proper to observe here, than this *meeting*, held by Marcellinus, is very improperly termed a *conference* (*collatio*.) For there was no dispute carried on at this meeting between the catholics and the Donatists; nor did any of the parties endeavour to gain or defeat the other by superiority of argument. This conference then was properly a *judicial trial*, in which Marcellinus was, by the emperor, appointed judge, or arbiter, of this religious controversy, and accordingly pronounced sentence after a proper hearing of the cause. It appears therefore from this event, that the notion of a supreme spiritual judge

at this conference, were 286 in number ; and those of the Donatists, 279. The latter, upon their defeat, appealed to the emperor, but without effect. The glory of their defeat was due to Augustin, who bore the principal part in this controversy, and who indeed by his writings, counsels, and admonitions, governed almost the whole African church, and also the principal and most illustrious heads of that extensive province.

III. By this conference the party of the Donatists was greatly weakened ; nor could they ever get the better of this terrible shock, though the face of affairs changed afterward in a manner that was proper to revive their hopes. The greatest part of them, through the fear of punishment, submitted to the emperor's decree, and returned into the bosom of the church ; while the severest penalties were inflicted upon those who remained obstinate, and persisted in their rebellion. Fines, banishment, confiscation of goods, were the ordinary punishments of the obstinate Donatists ; and even the pain of death was inflicted upon such as surpassed the rest in perverseness, and were the seditious ringleaders of that stubborn faction. Some avoided these penalties by flight ; others by concealing themselves ; and some were so desperate as to seek deliverance by self-murder, to which the Donatists had a shocking propensity. In the mean time, the Circumcelliones used more violent methods of warding off the execution of the sentence that was pronounced against their sect ; for they ran up and down through the province of Africa in the most outrageous manner, committing acts of cruelty every where, and defending themselves by force of arms.

The Donatists, indeed, recovered afterward their former liberty and tranquillity by the succour and protection they received, from the Vandals who invaded Africa, with Genseric at their head, in the year 427, and took this province out of the hands of the Romans. The wound, however, that this sect had received from the vigorous execution of the imperial laws was so deep, that though they began to revive and multiply by the assistance of the Vandals, yet they could never arrive at their former strength and lustre.

of controversy, and ruler of the church, appointed by Christ, had not as yet entered into any one's head ; since we see the African bishops themselves appealing to the emperor in the present religious question.

iv. The Arians, oppressed and persecuted by the imperial edicts, took refuge among those fierce and savage nations who were gradually overturning the western empire, and found among the Goths, Suevi, Heruli, Vandals, and Burgundians, a fixed residence and a peaceful retreat. And as their security animated their courage, they treated the catholics with the same violence which the latter had employed against them and other heretics; and they persecuted and vexed in various ways such as professed their adherence to the Nicene doctrines. The Vandals, who reigned in Africa, surpassed all the other savage nations in barbarity and injustice toward the catholics. The kings of this fierce people, particularly Genseric and Huneric his son, pulled down the churches of those Christians who acknowledged the divinity of Christ, sent their bishops into exile, and maimed and tormented, in various ways, such as were nobly firm and inflexible in the profession of their faith.^f They, however, declared, that in using these severe and violent methods, they were authorized by the example of the emperors, who had enacted laws of the same rigorous nature against the Donatists, the Arians, and other sects who differed in opinion from the Christians of Constantinople.^g

We must not here omit mentioning the stupendous miracle which is said to have been wrought during these persecutions in Africa, and by which the Supreme Being is supposed to have declared his displeasure against the Arians, and his favour toward their adversaries. This miracle consisted in enabling those catholics whose tongues had been cut out by the Arian tyrant Huneric, to speak distinctly, and to proclaim aloud the divine majesty of the Saviour of the world. This remarkable fact can scarcely be denied, since it is supported by the testimony of the most credible and respectable witnesses;^h but whether it

^f See Victor Vitens. lib. iii. *De persecutione Vandalica*, which Theod. Ruinart published at Paris in the year 1694, in 8vo. with his *History* of the same persecution.

^g See the edict of Huneric, in the history of Victor, mentioned in the preceding note, lib. iv. cap. ii. p. 64.

^h These witnesses, who had themselves ocular demonstration of the fact, were Victor of Utica, Æneas of Gaza, who examined the mouths of the persons in question, and found that their tongues were entirely rooted out, Procopius, Marcellinus the count, and the emperor Justinian. Upon the authority of such respectable testimonies, the learned Abbadie formed a laboured and dexterous defence of the miraculous nature of this extraordinary fact, in his work entitled, *La Triomphe de la Providence*, &c. vol. iii. p. 255, &c. where all the fire of his zeal, and all the subtilty of his logic, seem to have been exhausted. Dr. Berriman, in his *Historical Account of the Trinitarian Controversy*; as also in his sermons preached at Lady Mover's lectures, in the year 1725;

is to be attributed to a supernatural and miraculous power, is a matter not so easily decided, and which admits of much dispute.¹

and Dr. Chapman, in his *Miscellaneous Tracts*, have maintained the same hypothesis. To the former, an answer was published by an anonymous writer, under the following title, *An Inquiry into the Miracle said to have been wrought in the fifth century, upon some orthodox Christians, in favour of the Doctrine of the Trinity, &c. in a letter to a friend*. We may venture to say, that this answer is utterly unsatisfactory. The author of it, after having laboured to invalidate the testimony alleged in favour of the fact, seems himself scarcely convinced by his own arguments; for he acknowledges at last the possibility of the event, but persists in denying the miracle, and supposes that the cruel operation was so imperfectly performed upon these confessors, as to leave in some of them such a share of that organ, as was sufficient for the use of speech. Dr. Middleton, to whom some have attributed the forementioned *Answer*, maintains the same hypothesis, in his *Free Inquiry into the Miraculous Powers, &c.* supposing that the tongues of the persons in question were not entirely rooted out, which he corroborates by the following consideration, that two of the sufferers are said to have utterly lost the faculty of speaking. For though this be ascribed to a peculiar judgment of God punishing the immoralities of which they were afterward guilty, yet this appears to the doctor, to be a forced and improbable solution of the matter, who imagines he solves it better by supposing that they had not been deprived of their entire tongues. He goes yet further, and produces two cases from the Memoirs of the Academy of Sciences at Paris, which prove, in his opinion, "that this pretended miracle owed its whole credit to our ignorance of the powers of nature." The first is, that of a girl born without a tongue, who yet talked as easily and distinctly, as if she had enjoyed the full benefit of that organ; and the second, that of a boy, who, at the age of eight or nine years, lost his tongue by a gangrene or ulcer, and yet retained the faculty of speaking. See Middleton's *Free Inquiry, &c.* p. 183, 184.

This reasoning of the skeptical doctor of divinity appeared superficial and unsatisfactory to the judicious Mr. Dodwell, who, saying nothing about the case of the two Trinitarians who remained dumb, after their tongues were cut out, and whose dumbness is but indifferently accounted for by their immorality, since gifts have been often possessed without graces, confines himself to the consideration of the two parallel facts drawn from the *Academical Memoirs*, already mentioned. To show that these facts prove little or nothing against the miracle in question, he justly observes, that though in one or two particular cases, a mouth may be so singularly formed as to utter articulate sounds, without the usual instrument of speech, some excrescence probably supplying the defect, yet it cannot be any thing less than miraculous, that this should happen to a considerable number of persons, whose tongues were cut out to prevent their preaching a discountenanced doctrine. To deny the miracle in question, we must maintain, that it is as easy to speak without a tongue as with it. See Mr. Dodwell's *Free Answer to Dr. Middleton's Free Inquiry, &c.* p. 96, 97, &c.

Mr. Toll, who defended Middleton's hypothesis, has proposed an objection *a priori*, as it may be justly called, against the truth of this miracle. He observes, that the occasion on which it was wrought was not of sufficient consequence or necessity to require a divine interposition; for it was not wrought to convert infidels to Christianity, but to bring over the followers of Arius to the Athanasian faith; it was wrought, in a word, for the explication of a doctrine, which both sides allowed to be founded in the New Testament. Now, as the holy Scriptures are a revelation of the will of God, "it seems," says Mr. Toll, "to cast a reflection on his wisdom, as if he did things by halves, to suppose it necessary for him to work miracles, in order to ascertain the sense of those Scriptures. This," continues he, "would be multiplying miracles to an infinite degree; beside, it would destroy the universal truth of that proposition from which we cannot depart, namely, that the Scriptures are sufficiently plain in all things necessary to salvation." See Mr. Toll's *Defence of Dr. Middleton's Free Inquiry, against Mr. Dodwell's Free Answer*, p. 81, 82. To this specious objection Mr. Dodwell replies, that on the doctrine in dispute between the Arians and the orthodox, depend the true notion, as well as the importance and reality of our salvation; that the doctrines, duties, and motives of Christianity are exalted or debased, as we embrace the one or the other of those systems; that on the divinity of Christ, the meritoriousness of the propitiation offered by him must entirely rest; and that therefore no occasion of greater consequence can be assigned, on which a miracle might be expected. He adds, that the disputes which men have raised about certain doctrines, are no proof that these doctrines are

v. A new sect, which was the source of most fatal and deplorable divisions in the Christian church, was formed by Nestorius, a Syrian bishop of Constantinople, a disciple of the celebrated Theodore of Mopsuestia, and a man remarkable for his learning and eloquence, which were however accompanied with much levity and with intolerable arrogance. Before we enter into a particular account of the doctrine of this sectary, it is proper to observe, that though, by the decrees of former councils, it had been clearly and peremptorily determined that Christ was, at the same time, true God and true man; yet no council had hitherto decreed any thing concerning the *manner* and *effect* of this union of the two natures in the divine Saviour; nor was this matter, as yet, become a subject either of inquiry or dispute among Christians. The consequence of this was, that the Christian doctors expressed themselves differently concerning this mystery. Some used such forms of expression as seemed to widen the difference between the Son of God and the son of man, and thus to divide the nature of Christ into two distinct persons. Others, on the contrary, seemed to confound too much the Son of God with the son of man; and to suppose the nature of Christ *composed* of his divinity and humanity blended together into one.

The heresy of Appollinaris had given occasion to these different ways of speaking. For he maintained that the

not plainly revealed in Scripture, seeing this would prove that no truth is there sufficiently revealed, because, at one time or other, they had been all disputed; and he observes judiciously, that the expediency of interposing by miracles, is what we are not always competent judges of, since God only knows the times, seasons, and occasions, in which it is proper to alter the usual course of nature, in order to maintain the truth, to support the oppressed, and to carry on the great purposes of his gospel kingdom. It is enough, that the present interposition be not *incredible*, to remove Mr. Toll's objection, without considering its particular use, and the unexceptionable manner in which it is attested. See Mr. Dodwell's *Full and Final Reply to Mr. Toll's Defence*, &c. p. 270, 271.

We must observe here that this latter objection and answer are merely hypothetical, i. e. they draw their force only from the different opinions, which the ingenious Mr. Toll and his learned antagonist entertain concerning the importance of the doctrine, in favour of which this pretended miracle is said to have been wrought. The grand question, whose decision alone can finish this controversy, is, whether the tongues of these African confessors were entirely rooted out or no? The case of the two who remained dumb furnishes a shrewd presumption, that the cruel operation was not equally performed upon all. The immorality of these two, and the judgment of God, suspending with respect to them the influence of the miracle, do not solve this difficulty entirely, since, as we observed above, many have been possessed of *supernatural gifts* without *graces*; and Christ tells us that many have *cast out devils in his name*, whom at the last day he will not acknowledge as his faithful servants.

i See Ruinarti *Histor. persecut. Vandal.* part. ii. cap. vii. p. 482. See *Bibliothèque Britannique*, tom. iii. part ii. p. 339. tom. v. part i. p. 171.

man Christ was not endowed with a human soul, but with the divine nature, which was substituted in its place, and performed its functions ; and this doctrine manifestly supposed a *confusion* of the two natures in the Messiah. The Syrian doctors, therefore, that they might avoid the errors of Apollinaris, and exclude his followers from the communion of the church, were careful in establishing an accurate distinction between the divine and the human nature in the Son of God ; and for this purpose they used such forms of expression as seemed to favour the notion of Christ's being composed of two *distinct persons*. The manner of speaking adopted by the Alexandrians and Egyptians, had a different tendency, and seemed to countenance the doctrine of Apollinaris, and by a *confusion* of the *two natures* to blend them into *one*. Nestorius, who was a Syrian, and had adopted the sentiments of the doctors of his nation, was a violent enemy to all the sects ; but to none so much as to the Apollinarian faction, after whose ruin he breathed with an ardent and inextinguishable zeal. He therefore discoursed concerning the two natures in Christ after the Syrian manner, and commanded his disciples to distinguish carefully between the *actions* and *perceptions*^k of the Son of God, and those of the son of man.^l

VI. The occasion of this disagreeable controversy was furnished by the presbyter Anastasius, a friend of Nestorius. This presbyter, in a public discourse, delivered A. D. 428, declaimed warmly against the title of Θεοτοκος, or *mother of God*, which was now more frequently attributed to the Virgin Mary in the controversy against the Arians, than it had formerly been, and was a favourite term with the followers of Apollinaris. He at the same time gave it as his opinion, that the Holy Virgin was rather to be called Χριστοτοκος, i. e. *mother of Christ*, since the Deity can neither be born nor die, and of consequence

The occasion
of the Nesto-
rian contro-
versy.

^k The original word *perpassio*, which signifies properly *suffering*, or *passion*, we have here translated, by the general term *perception*, because *suffering*, or *passion*, cannot be in any sense attributed to the *Divine Nature*.

^l The Jesuit Doucin published at Paris, A. D. 1716, *A History of Nestorianism* ; but it is such a history as might be expected from a writer, who was obliged by his profession, to place the arrogant Cyril among the saints, and Nestorius among the heretics. The ancient writers on both sides of this controversy, are mentioned by Jo. Franc. Buddæus, in his *Isagoge in Theologiam*, tom. ii. p. 1034. The accounts given of this dispute by the Oriental writers, are collected by Euseb. Renaudot, in his *Historia Patriarch. Alexandrin.* p. 103, and by Jos. Sim. Assemanus, in his *Biblioth. Orient. Vatican.* tom. iii. part ii. p. 67.

the son of man alone could derive his birth from an earthly parent. Nestorius applauded these sentiments, and explained and defended them in several discourses.^m But both he and his friend Anastasius were keenly opposed by certain monks at Constantinople, who maintained that the son of Mary was *God incarnate*, and excited the zeal and fury of the populace to maintain this doctrine against Nestorius. Notwithstanding all this, the discourses of the latter were extremely well received in many places, and had the majority on their side. The Egyptian monks had no sooner perused them, than they were persuaded, by the weight of the arguments they contained, to embrace the opinions of Nestorius, and accordingly ceased to call the Blessed Virgin the *mother of God*.

VII. The prelate who ruled the see of Alexandria at this time was Cyril, a man of a haughty, turbulent, and imperious temper, and painfully jealous of the rising power and authority of the bishop of Constantinople. As soon as this controversy came to his knowledge, he censured the Egyptian monks and Nestorius; and finding the latter little disposed to submit to his censure, he proceeded to violent measures, took counsel with Celestine, bishop of Rome, whom he had engaged on his side, assembled a council at Alexandria, A. D. 430, and hurled no less than twelve anathemas at the head of Nestorius. The thunderstruck prelate did not sink under this violent shock; but seeing himself unjustly accused of derogating from the majesty of Christ, he retorted the same accusation upon his adversary, charged him with the Apollinarian heresy, with confounding the two natures in Christ, and loaded Cyril with as many anathemas as he had received from him. This unhappy contest between two bishops of the first order proceeded rather from corrupt motives of jealousy and ambition, than from a sincere and disinterested zeal for the truth, and was the source of evils and calamities without number.

VIII. When the spirits were so exasperated on both sides, by reciprocal excommunications and polemic writings, that there was no prospect of an amicable issue to this unintelligible controversy, Theodosius the younger called a council at Ephesus, A. D. 431, which was

Nestorius and Cyril reciprocally anathematized by each other.

The council of Ephesus.

^m See Harduini *Concilia*, tom. i. p. 2109. See also Jos. Sim. Assemanus, *Biblioth. Orient. Vatican.* tom. iii. part. ii. p. 199.

the *third general council* in the annals of the church. In this council Cyril presided, though he was the party concerned, and the avowed enemy of Nestorius; and he proposed examining and determining the matter in debate before John of Antioch and the other eastern bishops arrived. Nestorius objected against this proceeding, as irregular and unjust; but his remonstrances being without effect, he refused to comply with the summons which called him to appear before the council. Cyril, on the other hand, pushing on matters with a lawless violence, Nestorius was judged without being heard; and during the absence of a great number of those bishops who belonged to the council, he was compared with the traitor Judas, charged with blasphemy against the divine majesty, deprived of his episcopal dignity, and sent into exile, where he finished his days." The transactions of this council will appear to the candid and equitable reader in the most unfavourable light, as full of low artifice, contrary to all the rules of justice, and even destitute of the least air of common decency. The doctrine however that was established in it concerning Christ, was that which has been always acknowledged and adopted by the majority of Christians, viz. "that Christ was *one divine person* in whom *two natures* were most closely and intimately united, but without being mixed or confounded together."

ix. Nestorius, among other accusations of less moment, was charged with dividing the nature of Christ into *two distinct persons*, and with having maintained, that the *divine nature* was superadded to the *human nature* of Jesus, after it was formed, and was no more than an auxiliary support of the *man* Christ, through the whole of his life. Nestorius denied this charge even to the last, and solemnly professed his entire disapprobation of this doctrine." Nor indeed was this

The judgment which the impartial will form concerning this controversy.

n Those that desire a more ample account of this council, may consult the *Variorum Patrum Epistolæ ad Concilium Ephesinum pertinentes*, published at Louvain in the year 1682, from some Vatican and other manuscripts by Christian Lupus. Nestorius, in consequence of the sentence pronounced against him in this council, was first banished to Petra in Arabia, and afterward to Oasis, a solitary place in the deserts of Egypt, where he died in the year 435. The accounts given of his tragical death by Evagrius, in his *Ecol. Hist.* lib. i. cap. vii. and by Theodorus the reader, *Hist. Ecol.* lib. ii. p. 565, are entirely fabulous. ¶ Dr. Mosheim's account of the time of Nestorius's death is perhaps unexact; for it appears that Nestorius was at Oasis, when Socrates wrote, that is, A. D. 439. See *Socrat.* lib. vii. cap. xxxiv.

o See Garnier's edition of the works of Marius Mercator, tom. ii. p. 286. See also the fragments of those letters which Nestorius wrote some time before his death,

opinion ever proposed by him in any of his writings, but was only charged upon him by his iniquitous adversaries, as a consequence drawn from some incautious and ambiguous terms he used, and particularly from his refusing to call the Virgin Mary the *mother of God*.^p Hence many, nay, the greatest part of writers both ancient and modern, after a thorough examination of this matter, have positively concluded that the opinions of Nestorius, and of the council which condemned them, were the same in effect; that their difference was in words only, and that the whole blame of this unhappy controversy was to be charged upon the turbulent spirit of Cyril, and his aversion to Nestorius.^q

This judgment may be just upon the whole; but it is however true, that Nestorius committed two faults in the course of this controversy. The first was his giving offence to many Christians by abrogating a trite and innocent term;^r and the second, his presumptuously attempting to explain, by uncouth comparisons and improper expressions, a mystery which infinitely surpasses the extent of our imperfect reason. If to these defects we add the despotic spirit and the excessive warmth of this persecuted prelate, it will be difficult to decide who is most to be blamed, as the principal fomentor of this violent contest, Cyril or Nestorius.^s

which are to be found in Jos. Sim. Asseman. *Biblioth. Oriental. Vatican.* tom. ii. p. 40, 41.

p It is remarkable, that Cyril would not hear the explanations which Nestorius offered to give of his doctrine. Nay, the latter offered to grant the title of *Mother of God* to the Virgin Mary, provided that nothing else was thereby meant, but that *the man born of her was united to the Divinity*. See Socrat. lib. vii. cap. xxxiv.

q Luther was the first of the modern writers who thought thus. And he inveighed against Cyril, with the greatest bitterness, in his book *De conciliis*, tom. viii. opp. Altenb. p. 265, 266, 273. See also Bayle's *Dictionary*, at the articles Nestorius and Rodon. Christ. August. Salig, *De Eutychnismo ante Eutychem*, p. 200. Otto Frid. Schutzius, *De vita Chytræi*, lib. ii. cap. xxix. p. 190, 191. Jo. Voigt. *Biblioth. Historiæ Hæresiologie*, tom. i. part iii. p. 457. Paul. Ernest. Jablonsky, *Exerc. de Nestorianismo*, published at Berlin, A. D. 1720. *Thesaur. Epistoloc. Crozianus*, tom. i. p. 184, tom. iii. p. 175. *La Vie de la Croze*, par Jordin, p. 231, and many others. As to the faults that have been laid to the charge of Nestorius, they are collected by Asseman. in his *Biblioth. Orient. Vatican.* tom. iii. part ii. p. 210.

r The title of *Mother of God*, applied to the Virgin Mary, is not perhaps so innocent as Dr. Mosheim takes it to be. To the judicious and learned it can present no idea at all, and to the ignorant and unwary it may present the most absurd and monstrous notions. The invention and use of such mysterious terms as have no place in Scripture, are undoubtedly pernicious to true religion.

s There is no difficulty at all in deciding this question. Nestorius, though possessed of an arrogant and persecuting spirit in general, yet does not seem to deserve, in this particular case, the reproaches that are due to Cyril. Anastasius, and not Nestorius, was the first who kindled the flame; and Nestorius was the suffering and persecuted party from the beginning of the controversy to his death. His offers of accommodation were refused; his explanations were not read; his submission was rejected, and he was condemned unheard.

x. The council of Ephesus, instead of healing these divisions, did but inflame them more and more, and almost destroyed all hope of restoring concord and tranquillity in the church. John of Antioch and the other eastern bishops, for whose arrival Cyril had refused to wait, met at Ephesus, and pronounced against him and Memnon, the bishop of that city, who was his creature, as severe a sentence as they had thundered against Nestorius. Hence arose a new and obstinate dissension between Cyril and the orientals, with John the bishop of Antioch at their head. This flame was indeed somewhat abated, A. D. 433, after Cyril had received the *articles of faith* drawn up by John, and abandoned certain phrases and expressions of which the litigious might make a pernicious use. But the commotions which arose from this fatal controversy were more durable in the east.^t Nothing could oppose the progress of Nestorianism in those parts. The discipline and friends of the persecuted prelate carried his doctrine through all the oriental provinces, and erected every where congregations which professed an invincible opposition to the decrees of the council of Ephesus. The Persians, among others, opposed Cyril in the most vigorous manner, maintained that Nestorius had been unjustly condemned at Ephesus, and charged Cyril with removing that distinction which subsists between the *two natures* in Christ. But nothing tended so much to propagate with rapidity the doctrine of Nestorius, as its being received in the famous school which had for a long time flourished at Edessa. For the doctors of this renowned academy not only instructed the youth in the Nestorian tenets, but translated from the Greek into the Syrian language the books of Nestorius, of his master Theodorus of Mopsuestia, and the writings also of Diodorus of Tarsus, and spread them abroad throughout Assyria and Persia.^u

The progress of Nestorianism after the council of Ephesus.

xi. Of all the promoters of the Nestorian cause, there was none to whom it has such weighty obligations as to the famous Barsumas, who was ejected out of his place in the school of Edessa, and created

Barsumas, a zealous promoter of Nestorianism.

^t See Christ. Aug. Salig, *De Eutychnismo ante Eutychem*, p. 243.

^u See Jos. Simon. Assemani *Biblioth. Oriental. Clement. Vatican.* tom. i. p. 351, tom. iii. part ii. p. 69. This learned author may be advantageously used to correct what Eusebius Renaud. has said, in the second tome of his *Liturgia Orientales*, p. 99, concerning the first rise of the Nestorian doctrine in the eastern provinces. See also the *Ecclesiastical History of Theodorus the reader*, book ii. p. 558.

bishop of Nisibis, A. D. 435. This zealous prelate laboured with incredible assiduity and dexterity, from the year 440 to 485, to procure for the Nestorians, a solid and permanent settlement in Persia; and he was vigorously seconded in this undertaking by Maanes, bishop of Ardascira. So remarkable was the success which crowned the labours of Barsumas, that his fame extended throughout the east; and the Nestorians which still remain in Chaldæa, Persia, Assyria, and the adjacent countries, consider him alone, and not without reason, as their parent and founder. This indefatigable ecclesiastic not only persuaded Pherozes, the Persian monarch, to expel out of his dominions such Christians as had adopted the opinions of the Greeks, and to admit the Nestorians in their place, but he even engaged him to put the latter in possession of the principal seat of ecclesiastical authority in Persia, the see of Seleucia, which the patriarch or catholic of the Nestorians has always filled, even down to our time.^w The zeal and activity of Barsumas did not end here; he erected a famous school at Nisibis, from whence issued those Nestorian doctors, who, in this and the following century, spread abroad their tenets through Egypt, Syria, Arabia, India, Tartary, and China.^x

XII. The Nestorians, before their affairs were thus happily settled, had been divided among themselves with respect to the method of explaining their doctrine. Some maintained that the *manner* in which the two natures were united in Christ, was absolutely unknown; others, that the union of the divine nature with the man Jesus was only a union of *will, operation, and dignity*.^y This dissension, however, entirely ceased when the Nestorians were gathered together into one religious community, and lived in tranquillity under their own ecclesiastical government and laws. Their doctrine, as it was then determined in several councils assembled at Seleucia, amounts

The divisions of the Nestorians cease.

^w The bishop of Seleucia was, by the twenty-third canon of the council of Nice, honoured with peculiar marks of distinction, and among others with the title of catholic. He was invested with the power of ordaining archbishops, a privilege which belonged to the patriarchs alone, exalted above all the Grecian bishops, honoured as a patriarch, and in the œcumenical councils was the sixth in rank after the bishop of Jerusalem. See *Acta Concilii Nicæni Arab.* Alphons. Pisan. lib. iii. can. xxiii. xxiv.

^x See, for an ample account of this matter, Jos. Sim. Assemani *Biblioth. Oriental. Clement. Vatican.* tom. iii. part ii. p. 77.

^y Leontius Byzant. *adversus Nestorian. et Eutychian.* p. 537, tom. i. *Lecton. Antiquar.* Henr. Canisii, Jac. Basnag. *Prolegomen. ad Canisium*, tom. i. cap. ii. p. 19.

to what follows: “that in the Saviour of the world there were *two persons* or *ὑποστάσεις*; of which the one was *divine*, even the eternal *word*; and the other, which was *human*, was the man Jesus; that these two persons had only one *aspect*;² that the union between the Son of God and the son of man was formed in the moment of the Virgin’s conception, and was never to be dissolved; that it was not, however, a union of nature or of person, but only of will and affection; that Christ was therefore to be carefully distinguished from God, who dwelt in him as in his temple; and that Mary was to be called the *mother of Christ*, and not the *mother of God*.”

The abettors of this doctrine hold Nestorius in the highest veneration, as a man of singular and eminent sanctity, and worthy to be had in perpetual remembrance; but they maintain at the same time, that the doctrine he taught was much older than himself, and had been handed down from the earliest times of the Christian church; and for this reason they absolutely refused the title of Nestorians. And indeed, if we examine the matter attentively, we shall find that Barsumas and his followers, instead of teaching their disciples precisely the doctrine of Nestorius, rather polished and improved his uncouth system to their own taste, and added to it several tenets of which the good man never dreamt.

XIII. A violent aversion to the Nestorian errors led many into the opposite extreme. This was the case with the famous Eutyches, abbot of a certain convent of monks at Constantinople, and founder of a sect which was in direct opposition to that of Nestorius, yet equally prejudicial to the interests of the Christian church, by the pestilential discords and animosities it produced. The opinions of this new faction shot like lightning through the east; and it acquired such strength in its progress, as to create much uneasiness both to the Greeks and Nestorians, whose most vigorous efforts were not sufficient to prevent its rising to a high degree of credit and splendour. Eutyches began these troubles, A. D. 448, when he was far advanced in years; and to exert his utmost force and ve-

The Eutychelian sect.

[F. z This is the only way I know of translating the word *barsopa*, which was the term used by Nestorius, and which the Greeks render by the term *ὑπόστασις*. The word *person* would have done better in this unintelligible phrase, had it not been used immediately before in a different sense from that which Nestorius would convey by the obscure term *aspect*.

hemeness in opposing the progress of the Nestorian doctrine, he expressed his sentiments concerning the person of Christ in the very terms which the Egyptians made use of for that purpose, and taught, that *in Christ there was but one nature, viz. that of the incarnate word.*^a Hence he was thought to deny the existence of the human nature in Christ, and was accused of this by Eusebius of Dorylæum, in the council that was assembled by Flavianus at Constantinople, probably this same year. By a decree of this council he was ordered to renounce the above-mentioned opinion, which he obstinately refused to do, and was on this account excommunicated and deposed; little disposed, however, to acquiesce in this sentence, he appealed to the decision of a general council.

XIV. In consequence of this appeal, the emperor Theodosius assembled an *œcumenical council* at Ephesus, A. D. 449, at the head of which he placed Dioscorus, bishop of Alexandria, the successor of Cyril, the faithful imitator of his arrogance and fury, and a declared enemy to the bishop of Constantinople. Accordingly, by the influence and caballing of this turbulent man, matters were carried on in this council with the same want of equity and decency that had dishonoured a former Ephesian council, and characterized the proceedings of Cyril against Nestorius. For Dioscorus, in whose church a doctrine almost the same with that of the Eutychians was constantly taught, confounded matters with such artifice and dexterity, that the doctrine of *one incarnate nature* triumphed, and Eutyches was acquitted of the charge of error that had been brought against him. Flavianus, on the other hand, was, by the order of this unrighteous council, publicly scourged in the most barbarous manner, and banished to Epipas, a city of Lydia, where soon after he ended his days.^b The Greeks called this

^a That Cyril expressed himself in this manner, and appealed, for his justification in so doing, to the authority of Athanasius, is evident beyond all possibility of contradiction. But it is uncertain whether or no this manner of expression was adopted by Athanasius, since many are of opinion, that the book in which it is found, has been falsely attributed to him. See Mich. le Quien, *Dissert. ii. in Damasenum*, p. 31. Christ. Aug. Salig, *De Eutychianismo ante Eutichen*, p. 112. It appears, by what we read in the *Biblioth. Oriental*, &c. of Asseman. tom. i. p. 219, that the Syrians expressed themselves in this manner before Eutyches, though without designing thereby to broach any new doctrine, but rather without well knowing what they said. We stand yet in need of a solid and accurate history of the Eutychian troubles; notwithstanding the labours of the learned Salig upon that subject.

^b See the *Concilia Jo. Harduini*, tom. i. p. 82. *Liberati Breviarium*, cap. xii. p. 76. Leonis M. *Epist.* xciii. p. 625. Nicephori *Hist. Ecclesiast.* lib. xiv. cap. lxvii. p. 550, &c.

Ephesian council, a band, or *assembly of robbers*, *συνάθρονον ληστικόν*, to signify that every thing was carried in it by fraud or violence.^c And many councils indeed, both in this and the following ages, are equally entitled to the same dishonourable appellation.

xv. The face of affairs soon changed, and assumed an aspect utterly unfavourable to the party whom the Ephesian council had rendered triumphant. Flavianus and his followers not only engaged Leo the Great, bishop of Rome, in their interests, for the Roman pontiff was the ordinary refuge of the oppressed and conquered party in this century, but also remonstrated to the emperor, that a matter of such an arduous and important nature required, in order to its decision, a council composed out of the church universal. Leo seconded this latter request, demanded of Theodosius a general council, which no entreaties could persuade this emperor to grant. Upon his death, however, his successor Marcian consented to Leo's demand, and called, in the year 451, the council of Chalcedon,^d which is reckoned the *fourth general or œcumenical council*. The legates of Leo, who, in his famous letter to Flavianus, had already condemned the Eutychian doctrine, presided in this grand and crowded assembly. Dioscorus was condemned, deposed, and banished into Paphlagonia, the acts of the council of Ephesus were annulled, the *epistle* of Leo received as a rule of faith;^e Eutyches, who had been already sent into banishment, and deprived of his sacerdotal dignity by the emperor, was now condemned, though absent; and the following doctrine, which is at this time almost generally received, was inculcated upon Christians as the object of faith, viz. "that in Christ *two*

The council
of Chalcedon.

^c Though Flavianus died soon after the council of Ephesus of the bruises he had received from Dioscorus, and the other bishops of his party in that horrid assembly, yet before his death, he had appealed to Leo; and this appeal, pursued by Leo, occasioned the council, in which Eutyches was condemned, and the bloody Dioscorus deposed.

^d This council was, by the emperor's summons, first assembled at Nice, but afterward removed to Chalcedon; that the emperor, who, on account of the irruption of the Huns into Illyricum, was unwilling to go far from Constantinople, might assist at it in person.

^e This was the letter which Leo had written to Flavianus, after having been informed by him of what had passed in the council of Constantinople. In this *epistle* Leo approves of the decisions of that council, declares the doctrine of Eutyches heretical and impious, explains, with great appearance of perspicuity, the doctrine of the catholic church upon this perplexed subject; so that this letter was esteemed a masterpiece both of logic and eloquence, and was constantly read, during the *Advent* in the western churches.

distinct persons were united in *one person*, and that without any change, mixture, or confusion."

xvi. The remedy applied by this council, to heal the wounds of a torn and divided church, proved really worse than the disease. For a great number of oriental and Egyptian doctors, though of various characters and different opinions in other respects, united in opposing, with the utmost vehemence, the council of Chalcedon and the *epistle of Leo*, which it had adopted as a rule of faith, and were unanimous in maintaining a *unity of nature*, as well as of *person*, in Jesus Christ. Hence arose deplorable discords and civil wars, whose fury and barbarity were carried to the most excessive and incredible lengths. Upon the death of the emperor Marcian, the populace assembled tumultuously in Egypt, massacred Proterius, the successor of Dioscorus, and substituted in his place Timotheus Ælurus, who was a zealous defender of the Eutychian doctrine of *one incarnate nature* in Christ. This latter indeed was deposed and banished by the emperor Leo; but upon his death, was restored by Basilicus both to his liberty and episcopal dignity. After the death of Ælurus, the defenders of the council of Chalcedon chose in his place Timotheus, surnamed Salophaciolus, while the partisans of the Eutychian doctrine of the *one nature*, elected schismatically Peter Moggus to the same dignity. An edict of the emperor Zeno obliged the latter to yield. The triumph however of the Chalcedonians, on this occasion, was but transitory; for upon the death of Timotheus, John Talaia, whom they had chosen in his place, was removed by the same emperor;^f and Moggus, or Mongus, by an imperial edict, and the favour of Acaicius, bishop of Constantinople, was, in the year 482, raised to the see of Alexandria.

xvii. The abbot Barsumas, whom the reader must be careful not to confound with Barsumas of Nisibis, the famous promoter of the Nestorian doctrines, having been condemned by the council of Chalcedon,^g brought the Eutychian opinions into Syria, and by

^f See Liberati *Breviarium*, cap. xvi. xvii. xviii. Evagr. *Hist. Eccles.* lib. ii. cap. viii. lib. iii. cap. iii. Lequien, *Oriens Christianus*, tom. ii. p. 410.

^g The Barsumas, here mentioned, was he who assisted the bishop of Alexandria, Dioscorus, and the soldiers, in beating Flavianus to death in the council of Ephesus, and to shun whose fury, the orthodox bishops were forced to creep into holes, and hide themselves under benches, in that *pious assembly*.

the ministry of his disciple Samuel, spread them among the Armenians about the year 460. This doctrine, however, as it was commonly explained, had something so harsh and shocking in it, that the Syrians were easily engaged to abandon it by the exhortations of Xenaïas, otherwise called Philoxenus, bishop of Hierapolis, and the famous Peter Fullo. These doctors rejected the opinion attributed to Eutyches, that *the human nature of Christ* was absorbed by the divine,^h and modified matters so as to form the following hypothesis; “that in the Son of God there was *one nature*, which, notwithstanding its *unity*, was *double* and *compounded*.” This notion was not less repugnant to the decisions of the council of Chalcedon than the Eutychian doctrine, and was therefore steadfastly opposed by those who acknowledged the authority of that council.

XVIII. Peter, surnamed Fullo, from the trade of a fuller, which he exercised in his monastic state, had usurped the see of Antioch, and after having been several times deposed and condemned on account of the bitterness of his opposition to the council of Chalcedon, was fixed in it at last, A. D. 482, by the authority of the emperor Zeno, and the favour of Acacius, bishop of Constantinople.^k This troublesome and contentious man excited new discords in the church, and seemed ambitious of forming a new sect under the name of Theopaschites;^l for to the words, *O God most holy, &c.* in the famous hymn which the Greeks called *Trisagium*, he ordered the following phrase to be added in the eastern churches, *who hast suffered for us upon the cross*. His design in this was manifestly to raise a new sect, and also to fix more deeply in the minds of the people, the doctrine of *one nature in Christ*, to which he was zealously attached. His adversaries, and especially Felix the Roman pontiff, interpreted this addition to the hymn above mentioned

The troubles
excited by
Peter the ful-
ler.

^h Eutyches never affirmed what is here attributed to him; he maintained simply, that the *two natures*, which existed in Christ before his incarnation, became *one* after it, by the *hypostatical union*. This miserable dispute about words was nourished by the contending parties having no clear ideas of the terms *person* and *nature*; as also by an invincible ignorance of the subject in dispute.

ⁱ Jos. Sim. Assemani *Biblioth. Orient. Vat.* tom. ii. p. 1—10. See also the *Dissertation* of this author, *De Monophysitis*, which is prefixed to this volume.

^k Valesii *Dissertatio de Pet. Fullone, et de Synodis adversus eum collectis*, which is added to the third volume of the *Scriptor. Hist. Ecclesiast.* p. 173.

^l This word expresses the enormous error of those fanatic doctors, who imagined that the godhead suffered in and with Christ.

in a quite different manner, and charged him with maintaining that all the three persons of the godhead were crucified; and hence those who approved of his addition were called Theopaschites. The consequence of this dispute was, that the western Christians rejected the addition inserted by Fullo, which they judged relative to the whole trinity; while the orientals used it constantly after this period, and that without giving the least offence, because they applied it to Christ alone."^m

XIX. To put an end to this controversy, which had produced the most unhappy divisions both in church and state, the emperor Zeno, by the advice of Acacius, bishop of Constantinople, published, A. D. 482, the famous *henoticon*, or *decree of union*, which was designed to reconcile the contending parties. This *decree* repeated and confirmed all that had been enacted in the councils of Nice, Constantinople, Ephesus, and Chalcedon, against the Arians, Nestorians, and Eutychians, without making any particular mention of the council of Chalcedon.ⁿ For Acacius had persuaded the emperor, that the present opposition was not carried on against the decrees that had passed in the council of Chalcedon, but against the council itself; with respect to which, therefore, an entire silence was undoubtedly prudent in a proposal which, instead of reviving, was designed to put an end to all disputes, and to reconcile the most jarring principles.

In the mean time Mongus and Fullo, who filled the sees of Alexandria and Antioch, and headed the sect of the Monophysites,^o subscribed this *decree of union*, which was also approved by Acacius of Constantinople, and by all those of the two contending parties who were at all remarkable for their candour and moderation. But there were on all sides violent and obstinate bigots who opposed with vigour these pacific measures, and complained of the *henoticon* as injurious to the honour and authority of the most holy council of Chalcedon.^p Hence arose new contests, and new divisions, not less deplorable than those which the *decree of union* was designed to suppress.

^m See Norris, *Lib. de uno ex Trinitate carne passo*, tom. iii. opp. *Diss. i. cap. iii. p. 782*. Assemani *Biblioth. Orient. Vatican.* tom. i. p. 518, tom. ii. p. 36, 180.

ⁿ Evagrius, *Hist. Eccl.* lib. iii. cap. xiv. *Liberati Breviarium Hist.* cap. xviii.

^o This word expresses the doctrine of those who believed, that in Christ there was but one nature, and is, in most respects, the same with the term *Eutychians*.

^p See Facundus Hermian. *Defens trium Capitulum.* lib. xii. cap. iv.

XX. A considerable body of the Monophysites, or Eutychians, looked upon the conduct of Mongus, who had subscribed the *decree*, as highly criminal, and consequently formed themselves into a new faction, under the title of acephali, i. e. *headless*, because, by the submission of Mongus, they had been deprived of their chief. This sect was afterward divided into three others, who were called Anthropomorphites, Barsanuphites, and Esaianists; and these again, in the following century, were the unhappy occasion of new factions, of which the ancient writers make frequent mention.* It is however necessary to observe here, for the information of those whose curiosity interests them in inquiries of this nature, that these subdivisions of the Eutychian sect are not to be adopted with too much facility. Some of them are entirely fictitious; others are characterized by a nominal, and not by a real difference; the division is in *words*, and not in *things*; while a third sort are distinguished, not by their peculiar doctrines, but by certain rites and institutions; and matters of a merely circumstantial nature. Be that as it will, these numerous branches of the Eutychian faction did not flourish long; they declined gradually in the following century; and the influence and authority of the famous Baradæus contributed principally to their total extinction, by the union he established among the members of that sect.

Produces new
cosects
among the
Eutychians.

XXI. The Roman pontiff, Felix II. having assembled an Italian council, composed of sixty-seven bishops, condemned, deposed, and cut off from the communion of the church, Acacius, bishop of Constantinople, as a perfidious enemy to the truth. Several articles were alleged against Acacius, to furnish a pretext for the severity of this sentence; such as his attachment to the Monophysites, and their leaders Mongus and Fullo, the contempt with which he treated the council of Chalcedon, and other accusations of a like nature. But the true reasons of these proceedings, and of the irreconcilable hatred which the Roman pontiffs indulged against Acacius, were his denying the supremacy of the bishop of Rome,


And also
among the
partisans of
the council of
Chalcedon.

* Evagr. *Hist. Eccl.* lib. iii. cap. xiii. Leontius Byzant. *De sectis*, tom. i. *Lectior. Antiq.* Canisii, p. 537. Timoth. in *Cotelerii Monument. Ecclesie Græcæ*, tom. iii. p. 409.

r These sects are enumerated by Basnage, in his *Prolegom. ad Hen. Ganisii Lectior. Antiqu.* cap. iii. and by Asseman. in his *Dissertatio de Monophysitis*, p. 7.

his opposing it throughout the whole course of his ministry,^s and his ambitious efforts to enlarge beyond all bounds the authority and prerogatives of the see of Constantinople. The Greeks, however, defended the character and memory of their bishop against all the aspersions which were cast upon him by the Romans. Hence arose a new schism, and new contests, which were carried on with great violence until the following century, when the obstinacy and perseverance of the Latins triumphed over the opposition of the oriental Christians, and brought about an agreement, in consequence of which the names of Acacius and Fullo were struck out of the *diptychs*, or sacred registers, and thus branded with perpetual infamy.^t

XXII. These deplorable dissensions and contests had for their object a matter of the smallest importance. Eutyches was generally supposed to have maintained “that the *divine nature* of Christ had absorbed the *human*, and that consequently in him there was but *one nature*, viz. the *divine*,” but the truth of this supposition is as yet destitute of sufficient evidence. However that may have been, this opinion, as also Eutyches, its pretended author, were rejected and condemned by those who opposed the council of Chalcedon, and principally indeed by Xenaias and Fullo, who are therefore improperly called Eutychians, and belong rather to the class of the Monophysites. They who assumed this latter title held, “that the *divine* and *human nature* of Christ were so united as to form only *one nature*, yet without any *change*, *confusion*, or *mixture* of the two natures;” and that this caution might be carefully observed, and their meaning be well un-

 This again is one of the periods of Ecclesiastical History, in which we find a multitude of events, which are so many proofs how far the supremacy of the bishop of Rome was from being universally acknowledged. Pope Felix II. deposes and excommunicates Acacius the patriarch of Constantinople, who not only receives this sentence with contempt, but in his turn, anathematizes and excommunicates the pope, and orders his name to be struck out of the *diptychs*. This conduct of Acacius is approved by the emperor, the church of Constantinople, by almost all the eastern bishops, nay, by even Andreas of Thessalonica, who was at that time the pope's vicar for East Illyricum. This was the occasion of that general schism, which continued for the space of twenty-five years, between the eastern and western churches. It is here worthy of observation, that the eastern bishops did not adhere to the cause of Acacius from any other principle, as appears from the most authentic records of those times, than a persuasion of the illegality of his excommunication by the Roman pontiff, who in their judgment, had not a right to depose the first bishop of the east, without the consent of a general council.

^t Hen. Valesius, *Dissert. de synodis Roman. in quibus damnatus est Acacius, ad calcem*, tom. iii. *Scriptor. Eccl.* p. 179. Basnage, *Histoire de l'Eglise*, tom. i. p. 301, 380, 381. Bayle's *Dictionary* in English, at the article Acacius. David Blondel, *De la Primauté dans l'Eglise* p. 279. *Acta sanctorum*, tom. iii. Februar. p. 502.

stood, they frequently expressed themselves thus, “in Christ there is one nature; but that nature is twofold and compounded.”^u They disowned all relation and attachment to Eutyches; but regarded with the highest veneration, Dioscorus, Barsumas, Xenaias, and Fullo, as the pillars of their sect; and rejected not only the *epistle* of Leo, but also the decrees of the council of Chalcedon. The opinion of the Monophysites, if we judge of it by the terms in which it is here delivered, does not seem to differ in reality, but only in the manner of expression, from that which was established by the council of Chalcedon.^w But if we attend carefully to the metaphysical arguments and subtilties which the former employed to confirm their doctrine,^x we shall perhaps be induced to think that the controversy between the Monophysites and Chalcedonians is not merely a dispute about words.

XXIII. A new controversy arose in the church during this century, and its pestilential effects extended themselves through the following ages. The authors of it were Pelagius and Cælestius, both monks; the former a Briton, and the latter a native of Ireland;^y they lived at Rome in the greatest reputation, and were universally esteemed on account of their extraordinary piety and virtue.^z These monks looked upon the doctrines which were commonly received, “*concerning the original corruption of human nature, and the necessity of divine grace to enlighten*

The Pelagian controversy.

^u See the passages drawn from the writings of the Monophysites by the most learned, and frequently impartial Asseman. in his *Biblioth. Orient. Vatic.* tom. iii. p. 25, 26, 29, 34, 117, 133, 135, 277, 297, &c.

^w Many learned men treat this controversy as a mere dispute about words. Gregory Abulpharaius, himself a Monophysite, and the most learned of the sect, declares this as his opinion. Asseman. *Biblioth. Orient. &c.* tom. ii. p. 291. Add to this the *Biblioth. Italique*, tom. xvii. p. 285. La Croze, *Histoire du Christianisme des Indes*, p. 23, and *Histoire du Christianisme d’Ethiopie*, p. 14. Asseman, though a Roman by birth, and by religion, seems in a good measure, to have adopted the same way of thinking, as appears by p. 297, of the tome quoted above.

^x See the subtle argumentation of Abulpharaius, in the *Biblioth. Orient.* of Asseman. tom. ii. p. 288.

^y Nothing very certain can be advanced with respect to the native country of Cælestius, which some say was Scotland, and others Campania in Italy. We know, however, that he was descended of an illustrious family; and that after having applied himself to the study of the law for some time, he retired from the world, and embraced the monastic life. See Gennad. *De Script. Ecclesiast.* cap. xlv.

^z The learned and furious Jerome, who never once thought of doing common justice to those who had the misfortune to differ from him in opinion, accused Pelagius of gluttony and intemperance, after he had heard of his errors, though he had admired him before for his exemplary virtue. Augustin, more candid and honest, bears impartial testimony to the truth; and even while he writes against this heretic, acknowledges that he had made great progress in virtue and piety, that his life was chaste and his manners blameless: and this indeed is the truth of the matter.

the understanding, and purify the heart, as prejudicial to the progress of holiness and virtue, and tending to lull mankind in a presumptuous and fatal security. They maintained that these doctrines were as false as they were pernicious; that the sins of our *first parents* were *imputed to them* alone, and not to their *posterity*; that we derive no *corruption* from their fall, but are born as pure and unspotted as Adam came out of the forming hand of his Creator; that mankind therefore are capable of repentance and amendment; and of arriving to the highest degrees of piety and virtue by the use of their natural faculties and powers; that indeed, *external grace* is necessary to excite their endeavours, but that they have no need of the *internal* succours of the divine Spirit." These notions, and some others intimately connected with them," were propagated at Rome, though in a private manner, by the two monks already mentioned, who, retiring from that city, A. D. 410, upon the approach of the Goths, went first into Sicily, and afterward into Africa, where they published their doctrine with more freedom. From Africa Pelagius passed into Palestine, while Cælestius remained at Carthage with a view to preferment, desiring to be admitted among the presbyters of that city. But the discovery of his opinions having blasted his hopes, and his errors being condemned in a council held at Carthage, A. D. 412, he departed from that city, and went into the east. It was from this time that Augustin, the famous bishop of Hippo, began to attack the tenets of Pelagius and Cælestius in his learned and eloquent writings; and to him indeed is principally due the glory of having suppressed this sect in its very birth."

xxiv. Things went more smoothly with Pelagius in the east, where he enjoyed the protection and favour of John, bishop of Jerusalem, whose attachment to the sentiments of Origen led him naturally to countenance those of Pelagius, on account of the confor-

The progress of this controversy.

^a The doctrines that were more immediately connected with the main principles of Pelagius, were, that *infant baptism* was not a *sign or seal* of the remission of sins, but a mark of admission to the *kingdom of heaven*, which was only open to the pure in heart; that good works were *meritorious*, and the only conditions of salvation, with many others too tedious to mention.

^b The Pelagian controversy has been historically treated by many learned writers, such as Usher, in his *Antiquit. Eccles. Britannicæ*; Laet; Ger. Vossius; Noris; Garnier, in his *Supplement. Oper. Theodoretii*; Jansenius in *Augustino*; and others. Longueval also, a French Jesuit, wrote *A History of the Pelagians*. See the preface to the ninth vol. of his *Historia Ecclesiæ Gallicanæ*, p. 4. After all, it must be confessed, that of all these learned writers, none have exhausted this interesting subject, or treated it with a sufficient degree of impartiality.

mity that there seemed to be between these two systems. Under the shadow of this powerful protection, Pelagius made a public profession of his opinions, and formed disciples in several places. And though in the year 415, he was accused by Orosius, a Spanish presbyter, whom Augustin had sent into Palestine for that purpose, before an assembly of bishops met at Jerusalem, yet he was dismissed without the least censure; and not only so, but was soon after fully acquitted of all errors by the council of Diospolis.^c

This controversy was brought to Rome, and referred by Cælestius and Pelagius to the decision of Zosimus,^d who was raised to the pontificate, A. D. 417. The new pontiff, gained over by the ambiguous and seemingly orthodox *confession of faith*, that Cælestius, who was now at Rome, had artfully drawn up, and also by the letters and protestations of Pelagius, pronounced in favour of these monks, declared them sound in the faith and unjustly persecuted by their adversaries. The African bishops, with Augustin at their head, little affected with this declaration, continued obstinately to maintain the judgment they had pronounced in this matter, and to strengthen it by their exhortations, their letters, and their writings. Zosimus yielded to the perseverance of the Africans, changed his mind, and condemned, with the utmost severity, Pelagius and Cælestius, whom he had honoured with his approbation, and covered with his protection. This was followed by a train of evils, which pursued these two monks without interruption. They were condemned by that same Ephesian council which had launched its thunder at the head of Nestorius; in short, the Gauls, Britons, and Africans, by their councils, and the emperors, by their edicts and penal laws, demolished this sect in its infancy, and suppressed it entirely before it had acquired any tolerable degree of vigour or consistence.^e

c See Daniel, *Histoire du Concile de Diospolis*, which is to be found in the *Opuscula* of that eloquent and learned Jesuit, published at Paris in the year 1724, in three volumes quarto. Diospolis was a city of Palestine, known in Scripture by the name of Lydda; and the bishop who presided in this council, was Eulogius of Cæsarea, Metropolitan of Palestine.

d To preserve the thread of the history here, and prevent the reader's being surprised to find Pelagius and Cælestius appealing to Rome after having been acquitted at Diospolis, it is necessary to observe, that after the council of Diospolis, these two monks were condemned anew, A. D. 416, by the African bishops assembled at Carthage, and those of Numidia assembled at Milevum; upon which they appealed to Rome.

e See Gerard. Jo. Vossius, his *Historia Pelagiana*, lib. i. cap. lv. p. 130; as also the learned observations that have been made upon this controversy, in the *Bibliothèque*

xxv. The unhappy disputes about the opinions of Pelagius occasioned, as usually happens, other controversies equally prejudicial to the peace of the church, and the interests of true Christianity. In the course of this dispute, Augustin had delivered his opinion, *concerning the necessity of divine grace in order to our salvation, and the decrees of God with respect to the future conditions of men*, without being always consistent with himself, or intelligible to others. Hence certain monks of Adrumetum and others, were led into a notion, “that God not only predestinated the wicked to eternal punishment, but also to the guilt and transgression for which they are punished; and that thus both the good and bad actions of all men were determined from eternity by a divine decree, and fixed by an invincible necessity.” Those who embraced this opinion, were called predestinarians. Augustin used his utmost influence and authority to prevent the spreading of this doctrine, and explained his true sentiments with more perspicuity, that it might not be attributed to him. His efforts were seconded by the councils of Arles and Lyons, in which the doctrine in question was publicly rejected and condemned.^f But we must not omit observing, that the existence of this predestinarian sect has been denied by many learned men, and looked upon as an invention of the Semipelagians, designed to decry the followers of Augustin, by attributing to them unjustly this dangerous and pernicious error.^g

xxvi. A new and different modification was given to the doctrine of Augustin by the monk Cassian, who came from the east into France, and erected a monastery near Marseilles. Nor was he the only one who

Semipela-
gians.

Italique, tom. v. p. 74. The writers on both sides are mentioned by Jo. Franc. Budæus, in his *Isagoge ad Theologiam*, tom. ii. p. 1071. The learned Wall, in his *History of Infant Baptism*, vol. i. chap. xix. has given a concise and elegant account of the Pelagian controversy; an account which, though imperfect in several respects, abounds with solid and useful erudition.

^f See Jac. Sirmondi *Historia Prædestinariana*, tom. iv. opp. p. 271. Basnage *Histoire de l'Eglise*, tom. i. livr. xii. cap. ii. p. 698. Dion. Petavius, *Dogmat. Theol.* tom. vi. p. 168, 174, &c.

^g See Gilb. Mauguini *Fabula Prædestinariana, consultata*, which he subjoined to the second tome of his learned work, entitled, *Collectio variorum Scriptorum qui Sæc. ix. de Prædestinatione et Gratia scripserunt*. Fred. Spanhemius, *Introd. ad Historiam Eccles.* tom. i. opp. p. 995. Jac. Basnag. *Adnot. ad Prosperi Chronicon et Præf. ad Faustum Regiensem*, tom. i. *Lectio Antiqu.* Hen. Canisii, p. 315, 348. Granet, who wrote the life of Launoy, observes, that Sirmond had solicited Launoy to write against Mauguin, who denied the existence of the *predestinarian sect*; but that the former, having examined the matter with care and application, adopted the sentiment of Mauguin. The whole dispute about the existence of this sect will, when closely looked into, appear to

attempted to fix upon a certain temperature between the errors of Pelagius and the opinions of the African oracle; several persons embarked in this undertaking about the year 430, and hence arose a new sect, which were called, by their adversaries, Semipelagians.

The opinions of this sect have been misrepresented by its enemies upon several occasions; such is generally the fate of all parties in religious controversies. Their doctrine, as it has been generally explained by the learned, amounted to this: "that *inward preventing grace* was not necessary to form in the soul the *first beginnings* of true repentance and amendment; that every one was capable of producing these by the mere power of their natural faculties, as also of exercising faith in Christ, and forming the purposes of a holy and sincere obedience." But they acknowledged, at the same time, "that none could *persevere* or *advance* in that holy and virtuous course, which they had the power of *beginning*, without the perpetual support, and the powerful assistance of the divine grace."^b The disciples of Augustin in Gaul attacked the Semipelagians with the utmost vehemence, without being able to extirpate or overcome them.ⁱ The doctrine of this sect was so suited to the capacities of the generality of men, so conformable to the way of thinking that prevailed among the monastic orders, so well received among the gravest and most learned Grecian doctors, that neither the zeal nor industry of its adversaries could stop its rapid and extensive progress. Add to its other advantages, that neither Augustin, nor his followers, had ventured to condemn it in all its parts, nor to brand it as an impious and pernicious heresy.

be little more perhaps than a dispute about words. ☞ It may be very true, that about this time, nay, from the time of St. Paul, certain persons embraced the predestinarian opinions here mentioned. But there is no solid proof, that the abettors of these opinions ever formed themselves into a sect. See Basnage *Hist. de l'Eglise*, tom. i. p. 700.

☞ h The leading principles of the Semipelagians were the five following; 1. That God did not dispense his *grace* to one more than another, in consequence of predestination, i.e. an eternal and absolute decree, but was willing to save all men, if they complied with the terms of his gospel. 2. That Christ *died for all men*. 3. That the grace purchased by Christ, and necessary to salvation, was offered to all men. 4. That man, before he received grace, was capable of faith and holy desires. 5. That man born *free*, was consequently capable of resisting the influences of grace, or *complying* with its suggestions. See Basnage, *Histoire de l'Eglise*, tom. i. livr. xii. cap. i. p. 696, &c.

i Jac. Basnage, *Hist de l'Eglise*, tom. i. livr. xii. cap. i. *Hist. Littéraire de la France*, tom. ii. *Préf.* p. 9. Vossii *Histor. Pelagiana*, lib. v. p. 538. Scipio Maffei, under the fictitious name of Irenæus Veronensis, *De Heresi Pelagiana in tomo xxix. Opuscul. Scientif. Angeli Calogera*, p. 399.

XXVII. This was the commencement of those unhappy contests, those subtle and perplexing disputes concerning grace, or the nature and operation of that divine power, which is essentially required in order to salvation, that rent the church into the most deplorable divisions through the whole course of the succeeding age, and which, to the deep sorrow and regret of every true and generous Christian, have been continued down to the present time. The doctrine of Augustin, who was of opinion that, in the work of conversion and sanctification, all was to be attributed to a divine energy, and nothing to human agency, had many followers in all ages of the church; though his disciples have never been entirely agreed about the manner of explaining what he taught upon that head.* The followers of Cassian were, however, much more numerous; and his doctrine, though variously explained, was received in the greatest part of the monastic schools in Gaul, from whence it spread itself far and wide through the European provinces. As to the Greeks and other eastern Christians, they had embraced the Semipelagian doctrine before Cassian, and still adhere firmly to it. The generality of Christians looked upon the opinions of Pelagius as daring and presumptuous; and even to those who adopted them in secret, they appeared too free, and too far removed from the notions commonly received, to render the public profession of them advisable and prudent. Certain however it is, that in all ages of the church, there have been several persons who, in conformity with the doctrine attributed to this heretic, have believed mankind endowed with a *natural power* of paying to the divine laws a *perfect obedience*.

* It is well known that the Jansenists and Jesuits both plead the authority of St. Augustin, in behalf of their opposite systems with respect to predestination and grace. This knotty doctrine has exercised severely the pretended infallibility of the popes, and exposed it to the laughter of the wise upon many occasions; and the famous *Bull Unigenitus*, which of late years has made such noise, set Clement XI. in direct opposition with several of the most celebrated Roman pontiffs. Which are we to believe?

THE SIXTH CENTURY.

PART I.

EXTERNAL HISTORY OF THE CHURCH.

CHAPTER I.

CONCERNING THE PROSPEROUS EVENTS WHICH HAPPENED TO THE CHURCH DURING THIS CENTURY.

I. THE zeal of the bishops of Constantinople, seconded by the protection and influence of the Grecian emperors, increased the number of Christians in the east, and contributed to the conversion of some barbarous nations, of those particularly who lived upon the borders of the Euxine sea, as appears by the most authentic records of Grecian history. Among these nations were the Abasgi, who inhabited the country lying between the coasts of the Euxine sea, and mount Caucasus, and who embraced Christianity under the reign of Justinian;^a the Heruli, who dwelt beyond the Danube, and who were converted under the same reign;^b as also the Alans, Lazi, and Zani, with other uncivilized countries, whose situation at this time is only known by vague and imperfect conjectures. These conversions, indeed, however pompously they may sound, were extremely superficial and imperfect, as we learn from the most credible accounts that have been given of them. All that was required of these darkened nations amounted to an oral profession of their faith in Christ, to their abstaining from sacrificing to the gods, and their committing to memory certain forms of doctrine; while little care was taken to enrich their minds with pious sentiments, or to cultivate in their hearts virtuous affections. So that, even after their conversion to Christianity, they retained their primitive ferocity and savage manners,

The progress of the Christian religion in the east.

^a Procopius, *De bello Gothico*, lib. iv. cap. iii. Le Quien, *Oriens Christianus*, tom. i. n. 1351.

^b Procopius, l. c. lib. ii. cap. xiv.

and continued to distinguish themselves by the most horrid acts of cruelty and rapine, and the practice of all sorts of wickedness. In the greatest part of the Grecian provinces, and even in the capital of the eastern empire, there were still multitudes who preserved a secret attachment to the pagan religion. Of these, vast numbers were brought over to Christianity under the reign of Justin, by the ministerial labours of John, bishop of Asia.^c

II. In the western parts, Remigius or Remi, bishop of Rheims, who is commonly called *The Apostle of the Gauls*, signalized his zeal in the conversion of those who still adhered to the ancient superstitions;^d and his success was considerable, particularly after that auspicious period when Clovis, king of the Franks, embraced the gospel.

In Britain, several circumstances concurred to favour the propagation of Christianity. Ethelbert, king of Kent, and the most considerable of the Anglo Saxon monarchs, among whom that island was at this time divided, married Bertha, daughter of Cherebert, king of Paris, toward the conclusion of this century. This princess, partly by her own influence, and partly by the pious efforts of the clergy who followed her into Britain, gradually formed in the mind of Ethelbert a certain inclination to the Christian religion. While the king was in this favourable disposition, Gregory the Great sent into Britain, A. D. 596, forty Benedictine monks, with Augustin at their head,^e in order to bring to perfection what the pious queen had so happily begun. This monk, seconded by the zeal and assistance of Bertha, converted the king and the greatest part of the inhabitants of Kent, and laid anew the foundations of the British church.^f

The labours of Columbas, an Irish monk, were attended with success among the Picts and Scots, many of whom embraced the gospel of Christ.^g

^c Jos. Sim. Assemanus, *Biblioth. Orient. Vatic.* tom. ii. p. 85.

^d *Histoire Littéraire de la France*, tom. iii. p. 155.

^e This British apostle was prior of the monastery of St. Andrew, of the order of St. Benedict, at Rome. After his arrival in England, he converted the heathen temples into places of Christian worship, erected *Christ Church* into a cathedral, opened a seminary of learning, founded the abbey of St. Augustin, received episcopal ordination from the primate of Arles, was invested by pope Gregory with power over all the British bishops and Saxon prelates, and was the first archbishop of Canterbury.

^f Bede, *Histor. Eccles. Gentis Anglor.* lib. i. cap. xxiii. p. 55, edit. Chiffletii. Rapin's *History of England, Acta Sanctorum*. tom. iii. Februar. p. 470.

^g Bede, *Histor. Eccles.* lib. iii. cap. iv. p. 134.

In Germany, the Bohemians, Thuringians, and Boii, are said to have abandoned in this century their ancient superstitions,^b and to have received the light of divine truth; though this fact appears extremely doubtful to many.

All these conversions and sacred exploits will lose much of their importance in the esteem of such, as examine with attention the accounts which have been given of them by the writers of this and the succeeding ages. For by these accounts it appears, that the converted nations, now mentioned, retained a great part of their former impiety, superstition, and licentiousness; and that attached to Christ by a mere outward and nominal profession, they, in effect, renounced the purity of his doctrine, and the authority of his gospel, by their flagitious lives, and the superstitious and idolatrous rites and institutions which they continued to observe.ⁱ

III. A vast multitude of Jews, converted to Christianity in several places, were added to the church during the course of this century. Many in the east, particularly the inhabitants of Borium, a city of Lybia, were brought over to the truth by the persuasion and influence of the emperor Justinian.^k In the west, the zeal and authority of the Gallic and Spanish monarchs, the efforts of Gregory the Great, and the labours of Avitus, bishop of Vienne, engaged numbers of that blinded nation to receive the gospel. It must however be acknowledged, that of these conversions the greatest part were owing to the liberality of Christian princes, or to the fear of punishment, rather than to the force of argument or to the love of truth. In Gaul, the Jews were compelled by Childeric to receive the ordinance of baptism; and the same despotic method of converting was practised in Spain.^l This method, however, was entirely disapproved by Gregory the Great, who,

The Jews
converted in
several places.

^b Henr. Canisii *Lection. Antiquæ*, tom. iii. part ii. p. 208. Aventinus, *Annal Boiorum*.

ⁱ This is ingenuously confessed by the Benedictine monks, in the *Histoire Littéraire de la France*, tom. iii. Introduc. p. 8, 11, 13. See also the orders given to the Anglo Saxons by Gregory the Great, in his *Epist.* lib. xi. lxxvi. p. 1176, tom. ii. opp. edit. Benedict. where we find him permitting them to sacrifice to the saints, on their respective holydays, the victims which they had formerly offered to the gods. See also Wilkins's *Conciliæ Magnæ Britanniae*, tom. i. p. 18.

^k Procopius, *De Edificiis Justiniani*, lib. vi. cap. ii.

^l Greg. Turon. *Histor. Francor.* lib. vi. cap. xvii. Launoius, *De veteri more baptizandi Judæos et infideles*, cap. i. p. 700, 704, tom. ii. part ii. opp.

though extremely severe upon the heretics, would suffer no violence to be offered to the Jews.^m

VI. If credit is to be given to the writers of this century, the conversion of these uncivilized nations to Christianity was principally effected by the prodigies and miracles which the heralds of the gospel were enabled to work in its behalf. But the conduct of the converted nations is sufficient to invalidate the force of these testimonies; for certainly had such miracles been wrought among them, their lives would have been more suitable to their profession, and their attachment and obedience to the doctrines and laws of the gospel more steadfast and exemplary than they appear to have been. Beside, as we have already had occasion to observe, in abandoning their ancient superstitions, the greatest part of them were more influenced by the example and authority of their princes, than by force of argument, or the power of rational conviction. And indeed if we consider the wretched manner in which many of the first Christian missionaries performed the solemn task they had undertaken, we shall perceive that they wanted not many arguments to enforce the doctrines they taught, and the discipline they recommended; for they required nothing of these barbarous people that was difficult to be performed, or that laid any remarkable restraint upon their appetites and passions. The principal injunctions they imposed upon these rude proselytes were, that they should get by heart certain summaries of doctrine, and pay to the images of Christ and the saints the same religious services which they had formerly offered to the statues of the gods. Nor were they at all delicate or scrupulous in choosing the means of establishing their credit; for they looked upon it as lawful, nay, even meritorious, to deceive an ignorant and inattentive multitude, by representing to them as prodigies, things that were merely natural, as we learn from the most authentic records of these times.

^m See his *Epistles*, book i. ep. xlvii. tom. ii. opp. p. 541, edit. Benedict. particularly those which he wrote to Virgilius of Arles, Theodorus of Marseilles, and Peter of Carraëna.

CHAPTER II.

CONCERNING THE CALAMITOUS EVENTS WHICH HAPPENED TO THE CHURCH DURING THIS CENTURY.

I. **THOUGH** the abjuration of paganism was, by the imperial laws, made a necessary step to preferment, and to the exercising all public offices ; yet several persons, reputed for their erudition and gravity of manners, persisted in their adherence to the ancient superstition. Some remains of paganism are to be found in this century. Tribonian, the famous compiler of the Roman law, is thought by some to have been among the number of those who continued in their prejudices against the Christian religion ; and such also, in the opinion of many, was the case of Procopius the celebrated historian. It is at least undoubtedly certain, that Agathias, who was an eminent lawyer at Smyrna, and who had also acquired a considerable reputation as a historical writer, persevered in his attachment to the pagan worship. These illustrious Gentiles were exempted from the severities which were employed frequently to engage the lower orders to abandon the service of the gods. The rigour of the laws, as it usually happens in human life, fell only upon those who had neither rank, fortune, nor court favour to ward off their execution.

II. Surprised as we may be at the protection granted to the persons now mentioned, and that at a time when the gospel was, in many instances, propagated by unchristian methods ; it will appear still more astonishing, that the Platonic philosophers, whose opposition to Christianity was universally known, should be permitted, in Greece and Egypt, to teach publicly the tenets of their sect, which were absolutely incompatible with the doctrines of the gospel. These doctors indeed affected, generally speaking, a high degree of moderation and prudence, and for the most part, modified their expressions in such a manner, as to give to the pagan system an evangelical aspect, extremely adapted to deceive the unwary, as the examples of Chalcidius and Alexander of

Several write against Christianity.

¶ On The religion of Chalcidius has been much disputed among the learned. Cave seems inclined to rank him among the Christian writers, though he expresses some uncertainty about the matter. Huet, G. J. Vossius, Fabricius and Beausobre, decide with

Lycopolis abundantly testify.^o Some of them however were less modest, nay, carried their audacious efforts against Christianity so far as to revile it publicly. Damascius, in the life of Isodorus, and in other places, casts upon the Christians the most ignominious aspersions;^p Simplicius, in his illustrations of the Aristotelian philosophy, throws out several malignant insinuations against the doctrines of the gospel; and the *Epicheiremato* of Proclus, written expressly against the disciples of Jesus, were universally read, and were, on that account, accurately refuted by Philoponus.^q All this shows, that many of the magistrates, who were witnesses of these calumnious attempts against the gospel, were not so much Christians in reality, as in appearance; otherwise they would not have permitted the slanders of these licentious revilers to pass without correction or restraint.

III. Notwithstanding the extensive progress of the gospel,

somewhat more assurance that Chalcidius was a Christian. Some learned men have maintained on the contrary, that many things in the writings of this sage entitled him to a place among the pagan philosophers. Our learned author, in his notes to his Latin translation of Cudworth's *Intellectual System*, and in a *Dissertation de turbata per recentiores Platonicos Ecclesia*, lays down an hypothesis, which holds the middle way between these two extremes. He is of opinion that Chalcidius neither rejected nor embraced the whole system of the Christian doctrine, but selected out of the religion of Jesus and the tenets of Plato, a body of divinity, in which, however, Platonism was predominant; and that he was one of those syncretist or eclectic philosophers, who abounded in the fourth and fifth centuries, and who attempted the uniting paganism and Christianity into one motley system. This account of the matter, however, appears too vague to the celebrated author of the *Critical History of Philosophy*, M. Brucker. This excellent writer agrees with Dr. Mosheim in this, that Chalcidius followed the motley method of the eclectic Platonists, but does not see any thing in this inconsistent with his having publicly professed the Christian religion. For the question is not, whether this philosopher was a sound and orthodox Christian, which M. Brucker denies him to have been, but whether he had abandoned the pagan rites, and made a public profession of Christianity; and this our philosophical historian looks upon as evident. For though, in the commentary upon Plato's *Timæus*, Chalcidius teaches several doctrines that seem to strike at the foundations of our holy religion, yet the same may be said of Origen, Clemens Alexandrinus, Arnobius, and others, who are nevertheless reckoned among the professors of Christianity. The reader will find a most excellent view of the different opinions concerning the religion of Chalcidius, in the *Hist. Critica Philosophiæ*, Bruckeri, tom. iii. p. 472—485. The truth of the matter seems to be this, that the eclectics, before Christianity became the religion of the state, enriched their system from the gospel, but ranged themselves under the standards of Plato; and that they repaired to those of Christ, without any considerable change of their system, when the examples and authority of the emperors rendered the profession of the Christian religion a matter of prudence, as well as its own excellence rendered it most justly a matter of choice.

✎ So Alexander wrote a treatise against the Manichæans, which is published by Combefis, in the second tome of his *Auctor. Noviss. Biblioth. PP.* Photius, Combefis, and our learned Cave looked upon Alexander as a proselyte to Christianity. But Beausobre has demonstrated the contrary. See *Histoire de Manichéisme*, part ii. *Discours Preliminaire*, § 13, p. 236.

p Photius, *Bibliothecæ Cod.* ccxlii. p. 1027.

q See J. A. Fabricii *Bibliotheca Græca*, vol. iii. p. 522.

the Christians, even in this century, suffered grievously, in several places, from the savage cruelty and bitterness of their enemies. In Britain, the Anglo Saxons, who were masters of that kingdom, involved a multitude of its ancient inhabitants, who professed Christianity, in the deepest distresses, and tormented them with all that variety of suffering which the injurious and malignant spirit of persecution could invent. The Huns, in their irruption into Thrace, Greece, and the other provinces, during the reign of Justinian, treated the Christians with great barbarity; not so much, perhaps, from an aversion to Christianity, as from a hostile spirit of hatred against the Greeks, and a desire of overturning and destroying their empire. The face of affairs was totally changed in Italy, about the middle of this century, by a grand revolution which happened under the reign of Justinian I. This emperor, by the arms of Narses, overturned the kingdom of the Ostrogoths, which had subsisted ninety years; and subdued all Italy under his dominion. The state of things, however, which this revolution introduced, was not of a very long duration; for the Lombards, a fierce and warlike people, headed by Alboinus their king, and joined by several other German nations, issued forth from Pannonia, in the year 568, under the reign of Justin, invaded Italy, and having made themselves masters of the whole country, except Rome and Ravenna, erected a new kingdom at Ticinum. Under these new tyrants, who, to the natural ferocity of their characters, added an aversion to the religion of Jesus, the Christians, in the beginning, endured calamities of every kind. But the fury of these savage usurpers gradually subsided; and their manners contracted, from time to time, a milder character. Autharis, the third monarch of the Lombards, embraced Christianity, as it was professed by the Arians, in the year 587. But his successor Agilulf, who married his widow Theudelinda, was persuaded by that princess to abandon Arianism, and to adopt the tenets of the Nicene catholics.^s

But the calamities of the Christians, in all other countries, were light and inconsiderable in comparison of those which

The sufferings of the Christians in several places.

^r Usseii *Index Chronol. Antiquit. Eccles. Britann. subjectus ad A. 508*, p. 1123.

^s Paul. Diacon. *De gestis Longobardorum*, lib. ii. cap. ii. xxvii. p. 219, 231, edit. Lindenbrogii. Muratorii *Antiq. Italiæ*, tom. i. p. 14, tom. ii. p. 297. Giannone, *Histoire de Naples*, tom. i. p. 302.

they suffered in Persia under Chosroes, the inhuman monarch of that nation. This monster of impiety aimed his audacious and desperate efforts against Heaven itself; for he publicly declared, that he would make war not only upon Justinian, but also upon the God of the Christians; and in consequence of this blasphemous menace, he vented his rage against the followers of Jesus in the most barbarous manner, and put multitudes of them to the most cruel and ignominious deaths.ⁱ

i Procopius, *De bello Persico*, lib. ii. cap. xxvi

PART II.

INTERNAL HISTORY OF THE CHURCH.

CHAPTER I.

CONCERNING THE STATE OF LETTERS AND PHILOSOPHY DURING THIS CENTURY.

I. THE incursions of the barbarous nations into the greatest part of the western provinces, were extremely prejudicial to the interests of learning and philosophy, as must be known to all who have any acquaintance with the history of these unhappy times. During these tumultuous scenes of desolation and horror, the liberal arts and sciences would have been totally extinguished, had they not found a place of refuge, such as it was, among the bishops and the monastic orders. Here they assembled their scattered remains, and received a degree of culture which just served to keep them from perishing. Those churches which were distinguished by the name of *cathedrals*, had schools erected under their jurisdiction, in which the bishop, or a certain person appointed by him, instructed the youth in the *seven liberal arts*, as a preparatory introduction to the study of the Scriptures.^a Persons of both sexes, who had devoted themselves to the monastic life, were obliged, by the founders of their respective orders, to employ daily a certain portion of their time in reading the ancient doctors of the church, whose writings were looked upon as the rich repertoires of celestial wisdom, in which all the treasures of theology were centred.^b Hence libraries were formed in all the monasteries, and the pious and learned productions of the Christian and other writers were copied and dispersed by the diligence of transcribers appointed for that purpose, who

The state of letters in the west.

^a Fleury, *Discours sur l'Histoire Eccles. depuis l'an 600*, &c. § 21, p. 56, tom. xiii. de l'*Histoire Eccles. Histoire Liter. de la France*, tom. iii. Intr. § 32, p. 12. Herm. Conringii *Antiq. Academica*, p. 66—167, edit. Heumann.

^b Benedict. Anianensis *Concordia Regularum*, lib. ii. p. 55, 64, 75, 77, 80, 100, lib. iii. p. 16—41, &c. edit. Hug. Menardi. Jo. Mabillon, *Præf. ad Sæc. i. Actor. SS. Ord. Bened.* p. 41.

were generally such monks as by weakness of constitution, or other bodily infirmities, were rendered incapable of harder labour. To these establishments we owe the preservation and possession of all the ancient authors, sacred and profane, who escaped in this manner the savage fury of Gothic ignorance, and are happily transmitted to our times. It is also to be observed, that beside the schools that belonged to the cathedrals, there were others opened in the monasteries, in which the youth who were set apart for the monastic life, were instructed by the abbot or some of his ecclesiastics in the arts and sciences.^c

II. But these institutions and establishments, however laudable, did not produce such happy effects as might have been expected from them. For not to speak of the indolence of certain abbots and bishops, who neglected entirely the duties of their stations, nor of the bitter aversion which others discovered toward every sort of learning and erudition, which they considered as pernicious to the progress of piety;^d not to speak of the *illiberal ignorance* which several prelates affected, and which they injudiciously confounded with *Christian simplicity*;^e even those who applied themselves to the study and propagation of the sciences, were for the most part extremely unskilful and illiterate; and the branches of learning taught in the schools, were inconsiderable both as to their quality and their number.^f Greek literature was almost every where neglected; and those who by profession had devoted themselves to the culture of Latin erudition, spent their time and labour in grammatical subtilties and quibbles, as the pedantic examples of Isidorus and Cassiodorus abundantly show. Eloquence was degraded into a rhetorical bombast, a noisy kind of declamation, which was composed of motley and frigid allegories and barbarous terms, as may even appear from several parts of the writings of those superior geniuses who surpassed their contemporaries in precision and elegance, such as Boethius,

^c Benedict. *Concord. Reg. lib. ii. p. 232.* Mabillon. *Act. SS. Ord. Bened. tom. i. p. 314.*

^d Gregory the Great is said to have been of this number, and to have ordered a multitude of the productions of Pagan writers, and among others Livy's *Roman History*, to be committed to the flames. See Gabriel Liron, *Singularities Hist. et Liter. tom. i. p. 166.*

^e Mabillon. *Pref. ad Sæc. i. Benedict. p. 46.*

^f See M. Aur. Cassiodori *Liber de septem Disciplinis*, which is extant among his works.

Cassiodorus, Ennodius, and others. As to the other liberal arts, they shared the common calamity; and as they were now cultivated, had nothing very liberal or elegant in their appearance, consisting entirely in a few dry rules, which, instead of a complete and finished system, produced only a ghastly and lifeless skeleton.

III. Philosophy fared still worse than literature; for it was entirely banished from all the seminaries which were under the inspection and government of the ecclesiastical order. The study of philosophy decried. The greatest part of these zealots looked upon the study of philosophy not only as useless, but even pernicious to those who had dedicated themselves to the service of religion. The most eminent, nay, almost the only Latin philosopher of this age, was the celebrated Boethius, privy counsellor to Theodoric, king of the Ostrogoths in Italy. This illustrious senator had embraced the Platonic philosophy,^g but approved, also, as was usual among the modern Platonics, the doctrine of Aristotle, and illustrated it in his writings. And it was undoubtedly owing to the diligence and zeal with which he explained and recommended the Aristotelian philosophy, that it arose now among the Latins to a higher degree of credit than it had hitherto enjoyed.

IV. The state of the liberal arts among the Greeks was, in several places, much more flourishing than that in which we have left them among the Latins; The state of letters among the Greeks. and the emperors raised and nourished a spirit of literary emulation, by the noble rewards and the distinguished honours which they attached to the pursuit of all the various branches of learning.^h It is however certain, that, notwithstanding these encouragements, the sciences were cultivated with less ardour, and men of learning and genius were less numerous than in the preceding century.

In the beginning of this the modern Platonics maintained as yet their credit, and their philosophy was in vogue. The Alexandrian and Athenian schools flourished under the direction of Damascius, Isidorus, Simplicius, Eulamius, Hermias, Priscianus, and others, who were placed on the

^g This will appear evident to such as, with a competent knowledge of modern Platonism, read attentively the books of Boethius, *De consolatione*, &c. See also, on this subject, Renat. Vall. p. 10, 50. Holstenius in *vita Porphyrii*, p. 7, edit. Cantabr. See also Mascov. *Histor. Germanor.* tom. ii. p. 102.

^h See the *Codex Theodos.* tom. ii. lib. vi. p. 113. Herm. Conringius, *De studiis urbis Romanæ et Constantinop.* in a dissertation subjoined to his *Antiquitates Academicæ*.

highest summit of literary glory. But when the emperor Justinian, by a particular edict, prohibited the teaching of philosophy at Athens,ⁱ which edict, no doubt, was levelled at the modern Platonism already mentioned, and when his resentment began to flame out against those who refused to abandon the pagan worship, then all these celebrated philosophers took refuge among the Persians, who were at that time the enemies of Rome.^k They indeed returned from their voluntary exile, when the peace was concluded between the Persians and the Romans, A. D. 533;^l but they could never recover their former credit, and they gradually disappeared in the public schools and seminaries of learning, which ceased at length to be under their direction.

Thus expired that famous sect, which was distinguished by the title of the modern or later Platonic; and which, for a series of ages, had produced such divisions and tumults in the Christian church, and been, in other respects, prejudicial to the interests and progress of the gospel. It was succeeded by the Aristotelian philosophy, which arose imperceptibly out of its obscurity, and was placed in an advantageous light by the illustrations of the learned; but especially and principally by the celebrated commentaries of Philoponus. And indeed the knowledge of this philosophy was necessary for the Greeks; since it was from the depths of this peripatetical wisdom that the Monophysites and Nestorians drew the subtleties with which they endeavoured to overwhelm the abettors of the Ephesian and Chalcedonian councils.

v. The Nestorians and Monophysites, who lived in the east, turned equally their eyes toward Aristotle, ^{In the east.} and in order to train their respective followers to the field of controversy, and arm them with the subtleties of a contentious logic, translated the principal books of that deep philosopher into their native languages. Sergius, a Monophysite and philosopher, translated the books of Aristotle into Syriac.^m Uranius, a Syrian, propagated the doctrines of this philosopher in Persia; and disposed in their favour Chosroes, the monarch of that nation, who

i Johannes Malela, *Historia Chronica*, part ii. p. 187, edit. Oxon. Another testimony concerning this matter is cited from a certain *Chronicle* not yet published, by Nic. Ale-mannus, *ad Procopii Histor. Arcanum*, cap. xxvi. p. 377, edit. Venet.

k Agathias, *De rebus Justiniani*, lib. ii. p. 49, edit. Venet. tom. ii. *Corpor. Byzant.*

l See Wesselingii *Observat. Variar.* lib. i. cap. xviii. p. 117.

m Georgius Abulpharaius, *Historia Dynastiar.* published by Dr. Pocock, p. 94, 172.

became a zealous abettor of the peripatetic system." The same prince received from one of the Nestorian faction, which, after having procured the exclusion of the Greeks, triumphed at this time unrivalled in Persia, a translation of the Stagirite into the Persian language.^o

It is however to be observed, that among these eastern Christians there were some who rejected both the Platonic and Aristotelian doctrines; and unwilling to be obliged to others for their philosophical knowledge, invented systems of their own, which were inexpressibly chimerical and pregnant with absurdities. Of this class of original philosophers was Cosmas, a Nestorian, commonly called Indicopleustes, whose doctrines are extremely singular, and resemble more the notions of the orientals than the opinions of the Greeks.^p Such also was the writer from whose *Exposition of the Octateuch*, Photius has drawn several citations.^q

CHAPTER II.

CONCERNING THE DOCTORS AND MINISTERS OF THE CHURCH.

I. THE external form of church government continued without any remarkable alteration during the course of this century. But the bishops of Rome and Constantinople, who were considered as the most eminent and principal rulers of the Christian church, were engaged in perpetual disputes about the extent and limits of their respective jurisdictions, and seemed both to aspire at the supreme authority in ecclesiastical matters. The bishop of Constantinople not only claimed an unrivalled sovereignty over the eastern churches, but also maintained that his church was, in point of dignity, noway inferior to that of Rome. The Roman pontiffs beheld with impatience these lordly pretensions, and warmly asserted the pre-eminence of their church, and its

Disputes between the bishops of Rome and Constantinople.

n See Agathias, *De rebus Justiniani*, lib. ii. p. 48. That Uranius made use of the Aristotelian philosophy in the Eutychian controversy is evident even from this single circumstance, that Agathias represents him disputing concerning the *possibility and immiscibility* of God, και το αθανατον και αζευχτον.

o Agathias, l. c. lib. ii. p. 48, edit. Venet.


p Bernard de Montfaucon, *Præfat. ad Cosman*, p. 10, tom. ii. *Collectionis novæ patrum Græcorum*.


q *Biblioth. Codic.* xxxvi. p. 22, 23.

undoubted superiority over that of Constantinople. Gregory the Great distinguished himself in this violent contest; and the following event furnished him with an opportunity of exerting his zeal. In the year 588, John, bishop of Constantinople, surnamed the Faster, on account of his extraordinary abstinence and austerity, assembled by his own authority a council at Constantinople, to inquire into an accusation brought against Peter, patriarch of Antioch; and upon this occasion assumed the title of *œcumenical*, or *universal bishop*.^r Now, although this title had been formerly enjoyed by the bishops of Constantinople, and was also susceptible of an interpretation that might have prevented its giving umbrage or offence to any,^s yet Gregory suspected, both from the time and the occasion of John's renewing his claim to it, that he was aiming at a supremacy over all the Christian churches; and therefore he opposed his claim in the most vigorous manner, in letters to that purpose addressed to the emperor, and to such persons as he judged proper to second his opposition. But all his efforts were without effect; and the bishops of Constantinople continued to assume the title in question, though not in the sense in which it had alarmed the Roman pontiff.^t

II. This pontiff, however, adhered tenaciously to his purpose, opposed with vehemence the bishop of Constantinople, raised new tumults and dissensions among the sacred order, and aimed at no less than an unlimited supremacy over the Christian church. This ambitious design succeeded in the west; while in the eastern provinces, his arrogant pretensions were scarcely respected by any but those who were at enmity with the bishop of Constantinople; and this prelate

The Roman pontiff struggles hard for universal dominion.

 ^r We cannot avoid taking notice of some mistakes which have slipped from the pen of Dr. Mosheim in his narration of this event. First, the council here mentioned was held under the pontificate of Pelagius II. and not of Gregory the Great, who was not chosen bishop of Rome before A. D. 590. Secondly, the person accused before this council was not Peter, but Gregory, bishop of Antioch. Thirdly, it does not appear that the council was summoned by John of Constantinople, but by the emperor Mauricius, to whom Gregory had appealed from the governor of the east, before whom he was first accused.

 ^s The title of *universal bishop*, which had been given by Leo and Justinian to the patriarchs of Constantinople, was not attended with any accession of power.

^t Gregor. Magni *Epist.* lib. iv. v. vii. All the passages in these epistles that relate to this famous contest, have been extracted and illustrated by Launojus, in his *Assertio in Privileg. S. Medardi*, tom. iii. opp. part ii. p. 266. See also Le Quien, *Oriens Christianus* tom. i. p. 67. Pfaffii *Dissertatio de titulo Œcumenicus*, in the *Tempe Helvetica*, tom. iv. p. 99.

was always in a condition to make head against the progress of his authority in the east. How much the opinions of some were favourable to the lordly demands of the Roman pontiffs, may be easily imagined from an expression of Ennodius, that infamous and extravagant flatterer of Symmachus, who was a prelate of but ambiguous fame. This parasitical panegyrist, among other impertinent assertions, maintained, that the Roman pontiff was constituted *judge in the place of God*, which he filled as the vicerent of the Most High." On the other hand, it is certain, from a variety of the most authentic records, that both the emperors and the nations in general were far from being disposed to bear with patience the yoke of servitude which the see of Rome was arrogantly imposing upon the Christian church.^w The Gothic princes set bounds to the power of the bishop of Rome in Italy, permitted none to be raised to the pontificate without their approbation, and reserved to themselves the right of judging concerning the legality of every new election.^x They enacted spiritual laws, called the religious orders before their tribunals, and summoned councils by their regal authority.^y In consequence of all this, the pontiffs, amidst all their high pretensions, revered the pretensions of their kings and emperors, and submitted to their authority with the most profound humility: nor were they, as yet, so lost to all sense of shame, as to aim at the subjection of kings and princes to their ghostly dominion.^z

III. The rights and privileges of the clergy were very considerable before this period, and the riches which they had accumulated, immense; and both received daily augmentations from the growth of superstition in this century. The arts of a rapacious priesthood were practised upon the ignorant devotion of the simple; and even the remorse of the wicked was made

Vices and
corruption of
the clergy.

u See his *Apologeticum pro Synodo*, in the xvth volume of the *Bibliotheca Magna Patrum*, p. 248, edit. Paris. ☞ One would think that this servile adulator had never read the 4th verse of the 2d chapter of St. Paul's 2d *Epistle to the Thessalonians*, where the *antichrist*, or *man of sin*, is described in the very terms in which he represents the authority of the pontiff Symmachus.

w See particularly the truth of this assertion, with respect to Spain, in Geddes's *Dissertation on the Papal Supremacy, chiefly with relation to the ancient Spanish church*, which is to be found in the second volume of his *Miscellaneous Tracts*.

x See Jo. Jac. Mascovii *Histor. Germanor.* tom. ii. not. p. 113.

y Basnage, *Histoire des Eglises Reformees*, tom. i. p. 381.

z See the citations from Gregory the Great, collected by Launois, *De regia potestate in matrimon.* tom. i. opp. part ii. p. 691, and in his *Assertio in Privilegium S. Medardi*, p. 272, tom. 22. opp. part ii. See also Giannone, *Hist. de Naples*, tom. ii. p. 282.

an instrument of increasing the ecclesiastical treasure. For an opinion was propagated with industry among the people, that the remission of their sins was to be purchased by their liberalities to the churches and monks, and that the prayers of departed saints, whose efficacy was victorious at the throne of God, were to be bought by offerings presented to the temples, which were consecrated to these celestial mediators. But in proportion as the riches of the church increased, the various orders of the clergy were infected with those vices that are too often the consequences of an affluent prosperity. This appears, with the utmost evidence, from the imperial edicts and the decrees of councils, which were so frequently levelled at the immoralities of those who were distinguished by the name of *clerks*. For whence so many laws to restrain the vices, and to preserve the morals of the ecclesiastical orders, if they had fulfilled even the obligations of external decency, or shown, in the general tenor of their *lives*, a certain degree of respect for religion and virtue? Be that as it will, the effect of all these laws and edicts was so inconsiderable as to be scarcely perceived; for so high was the veneration paid, at this time, to the clergy, that their most flagitious crimes were corrected by the slightest and gentlest punishments; an unhappy circumstance, which added to their presumption, and rendered them more daring and audacious in iniquity.


iv. The bishops of Rome, who considered themselves as the chiefs and fathers of the Christian church, are not to be excepted from this censure, any more than the clergy who were under their jurisdiction.

The bishops
of Rome not
excepted.


We may form some notion of their humility and virtue by that long and vehement contention, which arose in the year 498, between Symmachus and Laurentius, who were on the same day elected to the pontificate by different parties, and whose dispute was at length decided by Theodoric king of the Goths. Each of these ecclesiastics maintained obstinately the validity of his election; they reciprocally accused each other of the most detestable crimes; and to their mutual dishonour, their accusations did not appear on either side entirely destitute of foundation. Three different councils, assembled at Rome, endeavoured

to terminate this odious schism,^a but without success. A fourth was summoned by Theodoric, to examine the accusations brought against Symmachus, to whom this prince had, at the beginning of the schism, adjudged the papal chair. This council was held about the commencement of this century, and in it the Roman pontiff was acquitted of the crimes laid to his charge. But the adverse party refused to acquiesce in this decision; and this gave occasion to Ennodius of Ticinum, now Pavia, to draw up his adulatory *apology for the council and Symmachus.*" In this apology, which disguises the truth under the seducing colours of a gaudy rhetoric, the reader will perceive that the foundations of that enormous power, which the popes of Rome afterward acquired, were now laid; but he will seek in vain in this laboured production any satisfactory proof of the injustice of the charge brought against Symmachus.^c

v. The number, credit, and influence of the monks augmented daily in all parts of the Christian world. The growth of the monks. They multiplied so prodigiously in the east, that whole armies might have been raised out of the monastic order, without any sensible diminution of that enormous body. The monastic life was also highly honoured, and had an incredible number of patrons and followers in all the western provinces, as appears from the rules which were prescribed, in this century, by various doctors, for directing the conduct of the cloistered monks and the holy virgins, that had sacrificed their capacity of being useful in the world, to the gloomy charms of a convent.^d In Great Britain, a certain abbot, named Congall, is said to have persuaded an incredible number of persons to abandon the affairs, obligations, and duties of social life, and to spend the remainder of their days in solitude, under a rule of

 a This schism may be truly termed odious, as it was carried on by assassinations, massacres, and all the cruel proceedings of a desperate civil war. See Paul Diaconus, lib. xvii.

b This *apology* may be seen in the xvth volume of the *Magn. Bibl. Patrum*, p. 248.

 c That Symmachus was never fairly acquitted, may be presumed from the *first*, and proved from the *second* of the following circumstances; *First*, that Theodoric, who was a wise and equitable prince, and who had attentively examined the charge brought against him, would not have referred the decision to the bishops, if the matter had been clear, but would have pronounced judgment himself, as he had formerly done concerning the legality of his election. The *second* circumstance against Symmachus is, that the council acquitted him without so much as hearing those who accused him; and he himself did not appear, though frequently summoned.

d These are in Holstenius's *Codex. Regularum*, part ii. which work was published at Rome, in three volumes 4to. in the year 1661. See also Edm. Martene et Ursin. *Durand. Thesaur. Anecd. Nov.* tom. i. p. 4.

discipline, of which he was the inventor.^e His disciples travelled through many countries, in which they propagated with such success the contagion of this monastic devotion, that in some time, Ireland, Gaul, Germany, and Switzerland, swarmed with those lazy orders, and were in a manner covered with convents. The most illustrious disciple of the abbot now mentioned, was Columban, whose singular rule of discipline is yet extant, and surpasses all the rest in simplicity and brevity.^f The monastic orders in general abounded with fanatics and profligates; the *latter* were more numerous than the *former* in the western converts, while in those of the east the fanatics were predominant.

VI. A new order of monks, which in a manner absorbed all the others that were established in the west, was instituted, A. D. 529, by Benedict of Nursia, a man of piety and reputation for the age he lived in. From his *rule* of discipline, which is yet extant, we learn that it was not his intention to impose it upon all the monastic societies, but to form an order whose discipline should be milder, their establishment more solid, and their manners more regular, than those of the other monastic bodies; and whose members, during the course of a holy and peaceful life, were to divide their time between prayer, reading, the education of youth, and other pious and learned labours.^g But in process of time, the followers of this celebrated ecclesiastic degenerated sadly from the piety of their founder, and lost sight of the duties of their station, and the great end of their establishment. Having acquired immense riches from the devout liberality of the opulent, they sunk into luxury, intemperance, and sloth, abandoned themselves to all sorts of vices, extended their zeal and attention to worldly affairs, insinuated themselves into the cabinets of princes, took part in political cabals and court factions, made a vast augmentation of superstitious rites and ceremonies in their order, to blind the multitude, and supply the place of their expiring virtue; and among other *meritorious* enterprises, laboured most ardently to swell the

^e Jac. Usserii *Antiq. Eccles. Britan.*

^f Usserii *Sylloge Antiquar. Epistolar. Hibernicar.* p. 5—15. Holstenii *Codex Regularum*, tom. ii. p. 48. Mabillon, *Profr. ad Sæculum ii. Benedictinum*, p. 4.

^g See Mabillon, *Acta Sanctor. Ord. Bened. Sæc. i.* and *Annales Ordin. Benedict.* tom. i. See also Helvetius and the other writers, who have given accounts of the monastic orders.

arrogance, by enlarging the power and authority of the Roman pontiff. The good Benedict never dreamt that the great purposes of his institution were to be thus perverted, much less did he give any encouragement or permission to such flagrant abuses. His rule of discipline was neither favourable to luxury nor ambition ; and it is still celebrated on account of its excellence, though it has not been observed for many ages.

It is proper to remark here, that the institution of Benedict changed, in several respects, the obligations and duties of the monastic life as it was regulated in the west. Among other things, he obliged those who entered into his order to promise, at the time of their being received as novitiates, and afterward at their *admission* as members of the society, to persevere in an obedience to the rules he had laid down, without attempting to change them in any respect. As he was extremely solicitous about the stability of his institution, this particular regulation was wise and prudent ; and it was so much the more necessary, that before his time the monks made no scruple of altering the laws and rules of their founders as often as they thought proper.^b

VII. This new order made a most rapid progress in the west, and in a short space of time arrived at the most flourishing state. In Gaul its interests were promoted by Maurus ; in Sicily and Sardinia, by Placidus ; in England, by Augustin and Mellitus ; in Italy, and other countries, by Gregory the Great, who is himself reported to have been for some time a member of this society ;ⁱ and it was afterward received in Germany by the means of Boniface.^k This sudden and amazing progress of the new order was ascribed by the Benedictines to the wisdom and sanctity of their discipline, and to the miracles which were worked by their founder and his followers. But a more attentive view of things will convince the impartial observer, that the protection of the Roman pontiffs, to the

^h See Mabillon, *Præf. ad Sæc. iv. Benedict. part i. p. 18.*

ⁱ See Mabillon, *Diss de vita Monastica Gregorii M. ad Hadr. Valesium*, tom. ii. *Analect. veter.* as also his *Præf. ad Sæc. i. Benedict. p. 29.* This circumstance, however, is denied by some writers ; and among others, by Gallonius, concerning whose book upon that subject, see Simon's *Lettres Choïsies*, tom. iii. p. 63.

^k Anton. Dadini Alteserræ, *Origines rei Monasticæ*, lib. i. cap. ix. p. 33. The propagation of the Benedictine order through the different provinces of Europe, is related by Mabillon, *Præf. ad Sæc. i. Benedictinum et ad Sæc. iv. part i. p. 62.*

advancement of whose grandeur and authority the Benedictines were most servilely devoted, contributed much more to the lustre and influence of their order, than any other circumstances, nay, than all other considerations united together. But however universal their credit was, they did not reign alone ; other orders subsisted in several places until the ninth century, when the Benedictine absorbed, indeed, all the other religious societies, and held unrivalled the reins of the monastic empire.¹

<sup>The principal
Greek and
oriental wri-
ters.</sup>

VIII. The most celebrated Greek and oriental writers that flourished in this century, were those which follow.

Procopius of Gaza, who interpreted successfully several books of Scripture.^m

Maxentius, a monk of Antioch, who, beside several treatises against the sects of his time, composed *Scholiums on Dionysius the areopagite*.

Agapetus, whose *Scheda Regia*, addressed to the emperor Justinian, procured him a place among the wisest and most judicious writers of this century.

Eulogius, a presbyter of Antioch, who was the terror of heretics, and a warm and strenuous defender of the orthodox faith.

John, patriarch of Constantinople, who, on account of his austere method of life was surnamed the Faster, and who acquired a certain degree of reputation by several little productions, and more particularly by his *Penitential*.

Leontius of Byzantium, whose book against the sects, and other writings, are yet extant.

Evagrius, a scholastic writer, whose *Ecclesiastical History* is, in many places, corrupted with fabulous narrations.

Anastatius of Sinai, whom most writers consider as the author of a trifling performance, written against a sort of heretics called Acephali, of whom we shall have occasion to speak afterward.ⁿ

IX. Among the Latin writers, the following are principally worthy of mention.

^{Latin writers.}

¹ Lenfant, *Histoire du Concile de Constance*, tom. ii. p. 32, 33.

^m See Simon, *Critique de la Bibliothèque Ecclesiastique de M. Du Pin*, tom. i. p. 197.

ⁿ See for an account of this book, Simon, l. c. tom. i. p. 232 ; as also Barat, *Bibliothèque Choisie*, tom. ii. p. 21.

Gregory the Great, bishop of Rome, who united the most inconsistent and contradictory qualities ; as in some cases he discovered a sound and penetrating judgment, and in others the most shameful and superstitious weakness ; and in general manifested an extreme aversion to all kinds of learning, as his *Epistles* and *Dialogues* sufficiently testify.^o

Cæsarius of Arles, who composed some moral writings, and drew up a *rule* of conduct and discipline for the *holy virgins*.^p

Fulgentius, bishop of Ruspina, who attacked with great warmth the Arians and Pelagians in Africa ; but whose style and manner were harsh and uncouth, as was generally the case of the African writers.^q

Ennodius, bishop of Ticinum, now Pavia, who was none of the meanest authors of this century, whether we consider his compositions in prose or in verse ; though he disgraced his talents, and dishonoured his eloquence, by his infamous adulation of the Roman pontiff, whom he exalted so high above all mortals, as to maintain that he was answerable to none upon earth for his conduct, and subject to no human tribunal.^r

Benedict of Nursia, who acquired an immortal name by the *rule* he laid down for the order which he instituted, and the multitude of religious societies that submitted to his discipline.

Dionysius, who was surnamed the Little, on account of his extraordinary humility, and was deservedly esteemed for his *Collection of the ancient Canons*, and also for his *Chronological Researches*.

Fulgentius Ferrandus, an African, who acquired a considerable degree of reputation by several treatises, but especially by his *Abridgment of the Canons* ; though his style and diction were entirely destitute of harmony and elegance.

Facundus, a strenuous defender of the *Three Chapters*, of which we shall give an account in their place.

^o A splendid edition of the works of Gregory was published at Paris in the year 1705, in four volumes folio, by father St. Marthe, a Benedictine monk. See an account of this pontiff, *Acta Sanctor.* tom. ii. Martii, p. 121.

^p Of this writer, the Benedictine monks have given a learned account in their *Histoire Liter. de la France*, tom. iii. p. 190.

^q See for an account of Fulgentius, the *Acta Sanctorum*, tom. i. Januar. p. 32, &c.

^r *Histoire Littéraire de la France*, tom. iii. p. 96.

Arator, who translated with tolerable success, *The Acts of the Apostles* into Latin verse.

Primasius, of Adrumetum, whose *Commentary upon the Epistles of St. Paul*, as also his book *concerning heresies*, are yet extant.

Liberatus, whose *Compendious History of the Nestorian and Eutychnian controversies*, entitle him to an eminent rank among the writers of this century.

Fortunatus, a man of various erudition, and whose poetic compositions are far from being destitute of genius.^s

Gregory of Tours, who is esteemed the father of Gallic history; and who would have descended with honour to posterity, did not his *Annals of the Franks*, and the rest of his writings, carry so many marks of levity, credulity, and weakness.^t

Gildas, the most ancient of the British writers, who composed a book *concerning the destruction of Britain*, in which there are several things not altogether unworthy of the curiosity of the learned.

Columbanus, a native of Ireland, who became famous on account of the monastic rules he prescribed to his followers, his zeal for establishing religious orders, and his poetical productions.^u

Isidore, bishop of Seville, whose grammatical, theological, and historical productions discover more learning and pedantry than judgment and taste.

We may conclude this enumeration of the Latin writers with the illustrious names of Boethius and Cassiodorus, who far surpassed all their contemporaries in learning and knowledge; the former shone forth with the brightest lustre in the republic of letters, as a philosopher, an orator, a poet, and a divine, and both in elegance and subtilty of genius had no superior, nor indeed any equal in this century; the latter, though in many respects inferior to him, was nevertheless far from being destitute of merit.^w Several productions of these writers have been transmitted down to our times.

^s *Histoire Littéraire de la France*, tom. iii. p. 464.

^t The life of Gregory of Tours is to be found in the *Histoire Littéraire de la France*; and his faults are mentioned by Pagi, in his *Dissert. de Dionysio Paris.* § 25, p. 6, which is added to the fourth tome of the *Breviarium Pontif. Romanor.* Launoïus defends this historian in many things in his works, tom. i. part ii. p. 131.

^u None have given more accurate accounts of Gildas and Columban than the learned Benedictines, *Histoire Littéraire de la France*, tom. iii. p. 279, 505.

^w See Simon, *Critique de la Bibliothèque de M. Du Pin*, tom. i. p. 211.

CHAPTER III.

CONCERNING THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH DURING THIS CENTURY.

I. WHEN once the ministers of the church had departed from the ancient simplicity of religious worship, and sullied the native purity of divine truth by a The increase of superstition. motley mixture of human inventions, it was difficult to set bounds to this growing corruption. Abuses were daily multiplied, and superstition drew from its horrid fecundity an incredible number of absurdities, which were added to the doctrine of Christ and his apostles. The controversial writers in the eastern provinces continued to render perplexed and obscure some of the principal doctrines of Christianity, by the subtile distinctions which they borrowed from a vain and chimerical philosophy. The public teachers and instructors of the people degenerated sadly from the apostolic character. They seemed to aim at nothing else, than to sink the multitude into the most opprobrious ignorance and superstition, to efface in their minds all sense of the beauty and excellence of genuine piety, and to substitute, in the place of religious principles, a blind veneration for the clergy, and a stupid zeal for a senseless round of ridiculous rites and ceremonies. This, perhaps, will appear less surprising, when we consider, that *the blind led the blind*; for the public ministers and teachers of religion were for the most part grossly ignorant; nay, almost as much so as the multitude whom they were appointed to instruct.

II. To be convinced of the truth of the dismal representation we have here given of the state of religion at this time, nothing more is necessary than to cast Proved by examples. an eye upon the doctrines now taught *concerning the worship of images and saints, the fire of purgatory, the efficacy of good works*, i. e. the observance of human rites and institutions, *toward the attainment of salvation, the power of relics to heal the diseases of the body and mind*; and such like sordid and miserable fancies, which are inculcated in many of the superstitious productions of this century, and particularly in the epistles and other writings of Gregory the Great. Nothing more ridiculous on the one hand, than the solemnity and liberality with which this good but silly

pontiff distributed the wonder-working relics ; and nothing more lamentable on the other, than the stupid eagerness and devotion with which the deluded multitude received them, and suffered themselves to be persuaded, that a portion of stinking oil, taken from the lamps which burned at the tombs of the martyrs, had a supernatural efficacy to sanctify its possessors, and to defend them from all dangers both of a temporal and spiritual nature.*

III. Several attempts were made in this century to lay down a proper and judicious method of explaining the Scriptures. Of this nature were the two books of Junilius, the African, *concerning the various parts of the divine law* ;^y a work destitute of precision and method, and by which it appears that the author had not sufficient knowledge and penetration for the task he undertook.

Cassiodorus also, in his two books *concerning the divine laws*, has delivered several rules for the right interpretation of the holy Scriptures.

Philoxenus the Syrian, translated into his native language, the *Psalms of David*, and the *books of the New Testament*.^z

The number of interpreters was considerable in this century. Those who made the greatest figure among the Greeks in this character, were Procopius of Gaza, Severus of Antioch, Julian, and a few others ; the first was an expositor of no mean abilities.^a The most eminent rank among the Latin commentators is due to Gregory the Great, Cassiodorus, Primasius,^b Isidore of Seville,^c and Bellator.

IV. It must however be acknowledged, that these writers scarcely deserve the name of expositors, if we except a small number of them, and among these the eastern Nestorians, who, following the example of Theodore of Mopsuestia, were careful in ex-

The defects of these expositors.

* See the list of Sacred oils, which Gregory the Great sent queen Theudelinda, in the work of Ruinartus, entitled, *Acta Martyrum sincera et selecta*, p. 619.

y See Simon, *Crit. de la Biblioth. de Du Pin*, tom. i. p. 229.

z Jos. Sim. Asseman. *Biblioth. Orient. Vatic.* tom. ii. p. 83.

a See Simon, *Lettres Choiesies*, tom. iv. p. 120, of the new edition.

b Simon, *Hist. Critique des principaux Commentateurs du N. T.* chap. xxiv. p. 347 ; as also his *Critique de la Bibliothéque des Auteurs Eccl. de Du Pin*, tom. i. p. 226.

c Simon, *Critique de la, &c. du M. Du Pin*, tom. i. p. 259.

ploring the true sense, and the native energy of the words employed in the holy Scriptures. So that we may divide the commentators of this age into two classes. In the *first*, we rank those who did nothing more than collect the opinions and interpretations which had been received by the ancient doctors of the church; which collections were afterward called *chains* by the Latins.^d Such was the *chain* of Olympiodorus on Job; the *chain* of Victor of Capua upon the *Four Gospels*; and the *Commentary* of Primasius on the *Epistle to the Romans*, which was compiled from the works of Augustin, Jerome, Ambrose, and others. Even Procopius of Gaza may be ranked in this class, though not with so much reason as the mere compilers now mentioned; since in many cases he has consulted the dictates of his own judgment, and not followed with a servile and implicit submission, the voice of antiquity. To the *second* class belong those fanciful expositors who, setting up Origen as their great model, neglect and overlook entirely the sense of the words employed by the sacred writers, lose themselves in spiritual refinements and allegorical digressions, and by the succour of a lively and luxuriant imagination, draw from the Scriptures arguments in favour of every whim they have thought proper to adopt. Such was Anastatius the Sinaite, whose *mysterious contemplations upon the six days creation*,^e betray the levity and ignorance of their author; and Gregory the Great, whose *moral observations upon the book of Job*, have formerly met with unmerited commendations. Such also were Isidore of Seville, and Primasius, as manifestly appears by the *book of Allegories upon the holy Scriptures*,^f which was invented by the former, and the *mystical exposition of the book of the Revelation*,^g which was imagined by the latter.

v. It would be needless to expect from the divines of this century an accurate view, or a clear and natural explanation of the Christian doctrine. The greatest part of them reasoned and disputed concerning the truths of the gospel, as the blind would argue about light and colours; and imagined that they had acquitted themselves nobly, when they had thrown

The methods
of explaining
the Christian
doctrine
which now
prevailed.

^d See Steph. Le Moine, *Prolegomena ad varia Sacra*, p. 53. Jo. Albert. Fabricii. *Biblioth. Græcæ*, lib. v. cap. xvii. or vol. vii. p. 727.

^e The title is *Contemplationes Anagogicæ in Hexaemeron*.

^f *Liber Allegoriarum in Scripturam Sacram*.

^g *Expositio Mystica in Apocalypsin*.

out a heap of crude and indigested notions, and overwhelmed their adversaries with a torrent of words.

We may perceive, however, in the writers of this age, some evident marks of the three different methods of explaining and inculcating the doctrines of religion, which are yet practised among the Greeks and Latins. For some collected together a heap, rather than a system of theological opinions, from the writings of the ancient doctors, from the decrees of councils, and from the holy Scriptures; such were Isidore of Seville among the Latins; whose *three books of sentences*, or *opinions*, are still extant; and Leontius the Cyprian among the Greeks, whose *Loci communes*, or *commonplace book of divinity*, which he had compiled from the writings of the ancients, have been much esteemed. These authors gave rise to that species of divinity which the Latins distinguished afterward by the name of *positive theology*.

Others endeavoured to explain the various doctrines of Christianity by reasoning upon their nature, their excellence, and fitness; and thus it was, even with the weapons of *reason* and *argument*, that the most of the Christian doctors disputed against the Nestorians, the Eutychians, and the Pelagians. These metaphysical divines were called *schoolmen*, and their writings were afterward characterized under the general term of *scholastic divinity*.

A third class of theological teachers, very different from those already mentioned, comprehended a certain species of fanatics who maintained that the knowledge of divine truth was only to be derived from inward feeling and mental contemplation. This class assumed the appellation of mystics. These three methods of deducing and unfolding the doctrines of the gospel have been transmitted down to our times. No writer of this century composed a judicious or complete system of divinity; though several branches of that sacred science were occasionally illustrated.

VI. Those who consecrated their pious labours to the advancement of practical religion and moral virtue, aimed at the fulfilling this good purpose, partly by laying down *precepts*, and partly by exhibiting edifying *examples*. They who promoted the cause of piety and virtue in the former way, modified their *precepts* according to the state and circumstances of the per-

The state of practical religion and virtue.

sons for whom they were designed. One sort of precepts were addressed to those who had not abandoned the connexions of civil society, but lived amidst the hurry of worldly affairs. A different set of rules was administered to those who aspired after higher degrees of perfection, and lived in a retirement from the contagion and vanities of the world. The *precepts* addressed to the former, represent the Christian life as consisting in certain external virtues, and acts of religion; as appears from the *Homilies* and *Exhortations* of Cæsarius; the *Capita Parænetica* of Agapetus; and especially from the *Formula honestæ vitæ*, i. e. the *summary of a virtuous life*, drawn up by Martin, archbishop of Braga.^h The rules administered to the latter sort of Christians, were more spiritual and sublime; they were exhorted to separate, as far as was possible, the soul from the body by divine contemplation; and for that purpose to enervate and emaciate the latter by watching, fasting, perpetual prayer, and singing of psalms, as we find in the dissertation of Fulgentius *upon fasting*, and those of Nicetius, *concerning the vigils of the servants of God*, and *the good effects of psalmody*. The Greeks adopted for their leader, in this mystic labyrinth, Dionysius, falsely called the Areopagite, whose pretended writings John of Scythopolis illustrated with annotations in this century. We need not be at any pains in pointing out the defects of these injudicious zealots; the smallest acquaintance with that rational religion, which is contained in the gospel, will be sufficient to open the eyes of the impartial upon the absurdities of that chimerical devotion we have now been describing.

VII. They who enforced the duties of Christianity by exhibiting *examples* of piety and virtue to the view of those for whom their instructions were designed, wrote for this purpose the *Lives of the saints*; and there was a considerable number of this kind of biographers both among the Greeks and Latins. Ennodius, Eugippius, Cyril of Scythopolis, Dionysius the Little, Cogitosus, and others, are to be ranked in this class. But however pious the intentions of these biographers may have been, it must be acknowledged that they executed it in a most contemptible manner. No models of rational

The lives of
the saints.

^h See the *Acta Sanctor. Martij*, tom. iii. p. 86.

piety are to be found among those pretended worthies, whom they propose to Christians as objects of imitation.

They amuse their readers with gigantic fables and trifling romances; the examples they exhibit are those of certain delirious *fanatics*, whom they call *saints*, men of a corrupt and perverted judgment, who offered violence to reason and nature by the horrors of an extravagant austerity in their own conduct, and by the severity of those singular and inhuman rules which they prescribed to others. For by what means were these men *sainted*? By starving themselves with a frantic obstinacy, and bearing the useless hardships of hunger, thirst, and inclement seasons, with steadfastness and perseverance; by running about the country like madmen in tattered garments, and sometimes half naked, or shutting themselves up in a narrow space, where they continued motionless; by standing for a long time in certain postures with their eyes closed, in the enthusiastic expectation of divine light. All this was saintlike and glorious; and the more that any ambitious fanatic departed from the dictates of reason and common sense, and counterfeited the wild gestures and the incoherent conduct of an idiot, or a lunatic, the surer was his prospect of obtaining an eminent rank among the heroes and demigods of a corrupt and degenerate church.

VIII. Many writers laboured with diligence to terminate the reigning controversies, but none with success. Polemical divinity. Nor shall we be much surprised, that these efforts were ineffectual, when we consider how they were conducted; for scarcely can we name a single writer, whose opposition to the Eutychians, Nestorians, and Pelagians, was carried on with probity, moderation, or prudence. Primasius and Philoponus wrote concerning all the sects, but their works are lost; the treatise of Leontius, upon the same extensive subject, is still extant, but is scarcely worth perusing. Isidore of Seville, and Leontius of Neapolis, disputed against the Jews, but with what success and dexterity will be easily imagined by those who are acquainted with the learning and logic of these times. We omit, therefore, any further mention of the miserable disputants of this century, from a persuasion that it will be more useful and entertaining to lay before the reader a brief account of the controversies that now divided and troubled the Christian church.

IX. Though the credit of Origen, and his system, seemed to lie expiring under the blows it had received from the zeal of the orthodox, and the repeated thunder of synods and councils, yet it was very far from being totally sunk. On the contrary, this great man, and his doctrine, were held by many, and especially by the monks, in the highest veneration, and cherished with a kind of enthusiasm which became boundless and extravagant. In the west, Bellator translated the works of Origen into the Latin language. In the eastern provinces, and particularly in Syria and Palestine, which were the principal seats of Origenism, the monks, seconded by several bishops, and chiefly by Theodore of Cæsarea in Cappadocia, defended the truth and authority of the doctrines of Origen against all his adversaries with incredible vehemence and contention of mind. The cause was at length brought before Justinian, who, in a long and verbose edict, addressed to Mennas patriarch of Constantinople,^k passed a severe condemnation upon Origen and his doctrine, and ordered it to be entirely suppressed.^l The effects of this edict were more violent than durable; for, upon the breaking out of the controversy concerning the *three chapters*,^m soon after this time, Origenism was not only revived in Palestine, but even recovered new vigour, and spread itself far and wide. Hence many commotions were raised in the church, which were however terminated by the fifth general council, assembled at Constantinople by Justinian, A. D. 533, and in which Origen and his followers were again condemned.ⁿ

The controversies concerning Origen and his doctrine renewed.

X. This controversy produced another, which continued much longer, was carried on with still more excessive degrees of animosity and violence, and the subject of which was of much less moment

The controversy concerning the three chapters.

i Cyrillus, *Scythopolis*, in *Vita Sabæ*, which is to be found in Cotelierius, *Monumenta Ecclesiæ Græcæ*, p. 370. Henr. Noris, *Dissertat. de Synodo Quinta*, cap. i. ii. p. 554, tom. i. opp.

k This edict is published in Harduin's *Concilia*, tom. iii. p. 243.

l This edict was procured by the solicitation of Pelagius, who was legate of Vigilius at the court of Constantinople, with a view to confound the Acephali, who were admirers of Origen, and particularly to vex Theodore, of whose credit with the emperor, Pelagius was extremely jealous. It was to return this affront, as well as to effect the purposes mentioned in the following section, that Theodore set on foot the controversy concerning the *three chapters*, which produced such tedious, cruel, and fatal dissensions in the church. See Basnage, *Histoire de l'Eglise*, livr. x. ch. vi. p. 520.

m For an explication of what is meant by the *three chapters*, see note o of the xth section.

n See Harduini *Concilia*, tom. iii. p. 283. Evagrius, *Hist. Eccles.* lib. iv. cap. xxxviii.

and importance. The emperor Justinian was eagerly bent upon extirpating that violent branch of the Monophysites, which was distinguished by the name of Acephali; and consulted upon this matter, Theodore, bishop of Cæsarea, who was a Monophysite, and at the same time, extremely attached to the doctrine of Origen. The artful prelate considered this as a favourable opportunity of procuring repose to the followers of Origen by exciting a new controversy, as also of casting a reproach upon the council of Chalcedon, and giving a mortal blow to the Nestorians and their cause. In order therefore to effect these three important purposes, he persuaded the emperor that the Acephali would return to the bosom of the church, under the following easy and reasonable conditions; namely, “that those passages in the acts of the council of Chalcedon, in which Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodoret of Cyprus, and Ibas of Edessa, had been pronounced orthodox, should be effaced; and that the productions of these prelates, which were known by the appellation of the *three chapters*,^o as also other writings of theirs, which discovered a manifest propensity toward the Nestorian errors, should be condemned and prohibited.” The emperor lent a propitious ear to the councils of this prelate; and by an edict published, A. D. 544, ordered the *three chapters* to be condemned and effaced, without any prejudice, however, to the authority of the council of Chalcedon.^p This edict was warmly opposed by the African and western bishops, and particularly by Vigilius, the Roman pontiff, who considered it as highly injurious not only to the authority of the council now mentioned, but also to the memory of those holy men whose writings and characters it covered

Basnage, *Hist. de l'Eglise*, livr. x. chap. vi. p. 517, &c. Pet. Dan. Huelii *Origeniana*, lib. ii. p. 224. Doucin's *Singular Diss.* which is subjoined to his *Historia Origeniana*. p. 345.

[^o] The pieces that were distinguished by the appellation of the *three chapters*, were,
 1. The writings of Theodore of Mopsuestia. 2. The books which Theodoret of Cyprus wrote against the *twelve Anathemas*, which Cyril had published against the Nestorians.
 3. The letter which Ibas of Edessa had written to one Maris a Persian, concerning the council of Ephesus and the condemnation of Nestorius. These writings were supposed to favour the Nestorian doctrine, and such indeed was their tendency. It is however to be observed, that Theodore of Mopsuestia lived before the time of Nestorius, and died not only in the communion of the church, but also in the highest reputation for his sanctity. Nor were the writings of the other two either condemned or censured by the council of Chalcedon; nay, the faith of Theodoret and Ibas was there declared entirely orthodox. The decision of the council of Constantinople, in opposition to this, shows that councils, as well as doctors, differ.

^p See Harduini *Concilia*, tom. iii. p. 287. Evagrius, *Hist. Ecclesiast.* lib. iv. cap. xxxviii. p. 412.

with reproach.⁹ Upon this, Justinian ordered Vigilius to repair immediately to Constantinople, that having him in his power, he might compel him with more facility to acquiesce in the edict, and reject the *three chapters*; and this method was attended with success, for the pontiff yielded. On the other hand, the bishops of Africa and Illyricum obliged Vigilius to retract his *judicatum*, by which, in a council of seventy bishops, he had condemned the *three chapters* in obedience to the emperor. For they separated themselves from the communion of this pope, and refused to acknowledge him as one of their brethren; nay, treated him as an apostate, until he approved what he had been obliged to condemn. The effect of this retraction redoubled the zeal and violence of Justinian, who, by a second edict, published A. D. 551, condemned anew the *three chapters*.

xi. After many cabals, commotions, and dissensions, which were occasioned by this trifling controversy, it was thought proper to submit the final decision of it to an assembly of the universal church. This assembly was accordingly summoned by Justinian to meet at Constantinople, A. D. 553, and is considered as the *fifth œcumenical* or *general council*. The emperor gained his point here; for beside the doctrines of Origen, the *three chapters*, the condemnation of which he had solely in view, were, by the bishops of the east, for there were very few western prelates present at this council, declared heretical and pernicious. Vigilius, who was now at Constantinople, refused his assent to the decrees of this council; for which reason, after having received various affronts, he was sent into exile, from whence he was not permitted to return

The œcumenical council.

⁹ Hen. Noris, *De Synodo quinta*, cap. x. p. 573, tom. i. opp. Basnage *Histoire de l'Eglise*, tom. i. livr. xi. cap. vi. p. 523.

¹⁰ We do not find in the acts of this council any one which condemns the doctrines of Origen. It is, however, generally imagined, that these doctrines were condemned by this assembly; and what gave rise to this notion was probably the fifteen Greek canons yet extant, in which the principal errors of Origen are condemned, and which are entitled the canons of the one hundred and sixty fathers assembled in the council of Constantinople. The tenets of Origen, which gave the most offence, were the following; 1. That in the Trinity the *Father* is greater than the *Son*, and the *Son* than the *Holy Ghost*. 2. The *pre-existence* of souls, which Origen considered as sent into mortal bodies for the punishment of sins committed in a former state of being. 3. That the *soul* of Christ was united to the *word* before the incarnation. 4. That the sun, moon, and stars, &c. were animated and endowed with rational souls. 5. That after the resurrection all bodies will be of a round figure. 6. That the torments of the damned will have an end; and that as Christ had been crucified in this world to save mankind, he is to be crucified in the next to save the devils.

before he had acquiesced in the decisions of this assembly;^s and changing his sentiments for the fourth time, had declared the opinions contained in the *three chapters* to be execrable blasphemies. His successor Pelagius, and all the Roman pontiffs that have since sited in the papal chair, adhered to the decrees of this council; but neither their authority, nor that of the emperor, could prevail upon the western bishops to follow their example in this respect. Many of these, on the contrary, carried matters so far as to separate themselves from the communion of the pope on this account; and the divisions that arose from hence in the church, were too violent to admit of an expeditious or easy reconciliation, and could only be healed by length of time.^t

XII. Another controversy of much more importance had been carried on before this period among the Greeks; it was first kindled in the year 519, and it arose upon the following question: *whether it could be said with propriety that ONE OF THE TRINITY suffered on the cross.* This was designed to embarrass the Nestorians, who seemed to separate too much the two natures in Christ; and the Scythian monks, who seconded this design, and to whom the rise of this controversy is principally to be imputed, maintained the affirmative of this nice and difficult question. Others asserted, on the contrary, that this manner of speaking was by no means to be adopted, since it bordered upon the erroneous expressions and tenets of the Theopaschites, who composed one of the sects into which the Eutychians were subdivided.^a This latter opinion was confirmed by Hormisdas, the Roman pontiff, to whom the Scythian monks had appealed in vain; but this, instead of allaying the heat of the present controversy, only added new fuel to the flame. John II. who

^s See Petr. de Marca, *Dissert. de decreto Vigilii pro confirmatione Synodi V.* which is to be found among the *Dissertations* subjoined to his learned work, *De concordia sacerdotii et imperii.*

^t The best account of this matter is to be found in Noris, *De synodo quinta œcumenica*, though even this excellent author cannot be vindicated from the imputation of a certain degree of partiality. See also Christ. Lupus, *Not. ad concilium quintum*, in his *Ad concilia Adnotat.*

^a The deacon Victor, and those who opposed the Scythian monks, expressed their opinion in the following proposition, viz. *one person of the Trinity suffered in the flesh.* Both sides received the council of Chalcedon, acknowledged *two natures* in Christ, in opposition to Eutyches; and only one person in opposition to Nestorius; and yet, by a torrent of jargon, and a long chain of unintelligible syllogisms, the Scythian monks accused their adversaries of Nestorianism, and were accused by them of the Eutychian heresy.

was one of the successors of Hormisdas, approved the proposition which the latter had condemned ; and confirming the opinion of the Scythian monks, exposed the decisions of the papal oracle to the laughter of the wise ; his sentence was afterward approved by the fifth general council ; and thus peace was restored in the church by the conclusion of these unintelligible disputes.^w

With the question now mentioned, there was another closely and intimately connected, namely, *whether the person of Christ could be considered as compounded*. Of this question the Scythian monks maintained the affirmative, and their adversaries the negative.

CHAPTER IV.

CONCERNING THE RITES AND CEREMONIES USED IN THE CHURCH DURING THIS CENTURY.

1. In this century the cause of true religion sunk apace, and the gloomy reign of superstition extended itself in proportion to the decay of genuine piety. Rites multiplied. This lamentable decay was supplied by a multitude of rites and ceremonies. In the east the Nestorian and Eutychian controversies gave occasion to the invention of various rites and external institutions, which were used as marks to distinguish from each other the contending parties. The western churches were loaded with rites by Gregory the Great, who had a marvellous fecundity of genius in inventing, and an irresistible force of eloquence in recommending superstitious observances. Nor will this appear surprising to those who know that, in the opinion of this pontiff, the *words* of the sacred writings were *images* of mysterious and invisible things ; for such as embrace this chimerical system will easily be led to express all the doctrines and precepts of religion by external rites and symbols. Gregory indeed is worthy of praise in this, that he did not pretend to force others to the observance of his inventions ; though this, perhaps, was as much owing to a want of power, as to a principle of moderation.

^w See Norisii *Historia Controversiæ de uno ex Trinitate passo*, tom. iii. opp. p. 771. The ancient writers who mention this controversy, call the monks who set it on foot, Scythians. But La Croze, in his *Thesaur. Epist.* tom. iii. p. 189, imagines that the country of these monks was Egypt, and not Scythia ; and this conjecture is supported by reasons which carry in them, at least, a high degree of probability.

II. This prodigious augmentation of rites and ceremonies rendered an augmentation of doctors and interpreters of these mysteries indispensably necessary. Hence a new kind of science arose, which had for its object the explication of these ceremonies, and the investigation of the causes and circumstances from whence they derived their origin. But the most of those who entered into these researches never went to the fountain head, to the true source of these idle inventions. They endeavoured to seek their origin in reason and Christianity; but in this they deceived themselves, or at least deluded others, and delivered to the world their own fancies, instead of letting them into the true cause of things. Had they been acquainted with the opinions and customs of remote antiquity, or studied the pontifical law of the Greeks and Romans, they had come at the true origin of many institutions, which were falsely looked upon as venerable and sacred.

III. The public worship of God was as yet celebrated by every nation in its own language; but was enlarged, from time to time, by the addition of various hymns, and other things of that nature, which were considered as proper to enliven devotion by the power of novelty. Gregory the Great prescribed a new method of administering the Lord's supper, with a magnificent assemblage of pompous ceremonies; this institution of his was called the *canon of the mass*; and if any are unwilling to give it the name of a new appointment, they must at least acknowledge that it was a considerable augmentation of the ancient canon for celebrating the eucharist, and occasioned a remarkable change in the administration of that ordinance. Many ages, however, passed before this *Gregorian canon* was adopted by all the Latin churches.*

Baptism. except in cases of necessity, was administered only on great festivals. We omit mentioning, for the sake of brevity, the litanies that were addressed to the saints, the different sorts of supplications, the *stations* or assemblies of Gregory, the forms of consecration, and other such institutions, which were contrived in this century to excite a species of external devotion, and to engage the outward senses in religious worship. An inquiry into

* See Theod. Chr. Lilienthal. *De canone missæ Gregoriano.*

these matters would of itself deserve to be made the subject of a separate work.

IV. There was an incredible number of temples erected in honour of the saints, during this century, both in the eastern and western provinces. The places set apart for public worship were already very numerous; but it was now that Christians first began to consider these sacred edifices as the means of purchasing the favour and protection of the saints, and to be persuaded that these departed spirits defended and guarded, against evils and calamities of every kind, the provinces, lands, cities, and villages, in which they were honoured with temples. The number of these temples was almost equalled by that of the festivals which were now observed in the Christian church, and many of which seem to have been instituted upon a pagan model. To those that were celebrated in the preceding century, were now added the festival of the *purification of the blessed Virgin*, invented with a design to remove the uneasiness of the heathen converts on account of the loss of their *lupercalia*, or feasts of Pan, which had been formerly observed in the month of February, the festival of the *immaculate conception*, the day set apart to commemorate the birth of St. John, and others less worthy of mention.

CHAPTER V.

CONCERNING THE DIVISIONS AND HERESIES THAT TROUBLED THE CHURCH DURING THIS CENTURY.

I. THE various sects which had fomented divisions among Christians in the early ages of the church, were far from being effectually suppressed or totally extirpated. Though they had been persecuted and afflicted with an infinite diversity of trials and calamities, yet they still subsisted, and continued to excite dissensions and tumults in many places. The Manicheans are said to have gained such a degree of influence among the Persians, as to have corrupted even the son of Cabades, the monarch of that nation, who repaid their zeal in making proselytes with a terrible massacre, in which numbers of that impious sect perished in the most dreadful manner. Nor was Persia the only country which

The remains
of the ancient
heresies.

Manicheans.

was troubled with the attempts of the Manicheans to spread their odious doctrine ; other provinces of the empire were undoubtedly infected with their errors, as we may judge from the book that was written against them by Heraclian, bishop of Chalcedon. In Gaul and Africa, Semipelagi-
ans. dissensions of a different kind prevailed ; and the controversy between the Semipelagians and the disciples of Augustin continued to divide the western churches.

II. The Donatists enjoyed the sweets of freedom and tranquillity as long as the Vandals reigned in Africa ; but the scene was greatly changed with respect to them, when the empire of these barbarians was overturned in the year 534. They, however, still remained in a separate body, and not only held their church, but toward the conclusion of this century, and particularly from the year 591, defended themselves with new degrees of animosity and vigour, and were bold enough to attempt the multiplication of their sect. Gregory, the Roman pontiff, opposed these efforts with great spirit and assiduity ; and as appears from his epistles, tried various methods of depressing this faction, which was pluming its wings anew, and menacing the revival of those lamentable divisions which it had formerly excited in the church. Nor was the opposition of the zealous pontiff without effect ; it seems, on the contrary, to have been attended with the desired success, since, in this century, the church of the Donatists dwindled away to nothing, and after this period no traces of it are any where to be found.

III. Towards the commencement of this century, the Arians were triumphant in several parts of Asia, Africa, and Europe. Many of the Asiatic bishops favoured them secretly, while their opinions were openly professed, and their cause maintained by the Vandals in Africa, the Goths in Italy, the Spaniards, the Burgundians, the Suevi, and the greatest part of the Gauls. It is true, the Greeks, who had received the decrees of the council of Nice, persecuted and oppressed the Arians wherever their influence and authority could reach ; but the Nicenians, in their turn, were not less rigorously treated by their adversaries, particularly in Africa and

y See Photius, *Biblioth. Cod.* cxiv. p. 291.

z See his *epistles*, lib. iv. ep. xxxiv. xxxv. p. 714, 715, lib. vi. ep. lxxv. p. 841, ep. xxxvii. p. 821, lib. ix. ep. liii. p. 972, lib. ii. ep. xlviii. p. 611, tom. ii. opp.

Italy, where they felt in a very severe manner, the weight of the Arian power, and the bitterness of their resentment.^a

The triumphs of Arianism were, however, but transitory; and its prosperous days were entirely eclipsed, when the Vandals were driven out of Africa, and the Goths out of Italy, by the arms of Justinian.^b For the other Arian princes were easily induced to abandon, themselves, the doctrine of that sect; and not only so, but to employ the force of laws and the authority of councils to prevent its further progress among their subjects, and to extirpate it entirely out of their dominions. Such was the conduct of Sigismond king of the Burgundians; Theodimir king of the Suevi, who had settled in Lusitania; and Reccared king of Spain. Whether the change wrought in these princes was owing to the force of reason and argument, or to the influence of hopes and fears, is a question which we shall not pretend to determine. One thing however is certain; and that is, that from this period, the Arian sect declined apace, and could never after recover any considerable degree of stability and consistence.

iv. The Nestorians, after having gained a firm footing in Persia, and established the patriarch, or head of their sect at Seleucia, extended their views The state of the Nestorians. further, and spread their doctrines, with a success equal to the ardour of their zeal, through the provinces that lay beyond the limits of the Roman empire. There are yet extant authentic records, from which it appears, that throughout all Persia, as also in India, Armenia, Arabia, Syria, and other countries, there were vast numbers of Nestorian churches, all under the jurisdiction of the patriarch of Seleucia.^c It is true indeed that the Persian monarchs were not all equally favourable to this growing sect, and that some of them even persecuted, with the utmost severity, all those who bore the Christian name throughout their dominions;^d but it is also true, that such

^a Procopius, *De bello Vandal.* lib. i. cap. viii. and *De bello Gothico*, lib. ii. cap. ii. Evagrius, *Hist. Ecclesiast.* lib. iv. cap. xv.

^b See Mascovii *Historia German.* tom. ii. p. 76, 91. See also an account of the Barbarian kings, who abandoned Arianism, and received the doctrines of the Nicene council, in the *Acta Sanctorum*, tom. ii. Martii, p. 275, and April. p. 134.

^c Cosmas Indicopleustes *Topographia Christianæ*, lib. ii. p. 125, which is to be found in Montfaucon's *Collectio nova PP. Græcorum*.

^d Jos. Sim. Asseman. *Biblioth. Orient. Vatic.* tom. iii. part i. p. 109, 407, 411, 441, 449, tom. iii. part ii. cap. v. § 2. p. 83.

of these princes as were disposed to exercise moderation and benignity toward the Christians, were much more indulgent to the Nestorians, than to their adversaries who adhered to the council of Ephesus, since the latter were considered as spies employed by the Greeks, with whom they were connected by the ties of religion.

v. The Monophysites, or Eutychians, flourished also in this century, and had gained over to their doctrine a considerable part of the eastern provinces.

Eutychian
controversies.

The emperor Anastasius was warmly attached to the doctrine and sect of the Acephali, who were reckoned among the more rigid Monophysites; and in the year 513, created patriarch of Antioch, in the room of Flavian, whom he had expelled from that see, Severus, a learned monk of Palestine, from whom the Monophysites were called Severians.^c This emperor exerted all his influence and authority to destroy the credit of the council of Chalcedon in the east, and to maintain the cause of those who adhered to the doctrine of *one nature* in Christ; and by the ardour and vehemence of his zeal, he excited the most deplorable seditions and tumults in the church.^e After the death of Anastasius, which happened, A. D. 518, Severus was expelled in his turn; and the sect which the late emperor had maintained and propagated with such zeal and assiduity, was every where opposed and depressed by his successor Justin, and the following emperors, in such a manner, that it seemed to be upon the very brink of ruin, notwithstanding that it had created Sergius patriarch in the place of Severus.^h

vi. When the affairs of the Monophysites were in such a desperate situation, that almost all hope of their recovery was vanished, and their bishops were reduced, by death and imprisonment, to a very small number, an obscure man, whose name was Jacob, and who was distinguished from others, so called, by the surname of Baradæus, or Zanzalus, restored this expiring

Jacob Baradæus the restorer of the Monophysites.

^c Evagrius, *Hist. Ecclesiast.* lib. iii. cap. xxx. xlv. &c. Theodorus the Reader, *Hist. Ecclesiast.* lib. ii. p. 562. See also the *Index operum Severi*, as it stands collected from ancient MSS. in Montfaucon's *Bibliotheca Constantiniana*, p. 53.

^f See Jos. Sim. Asseman. *Biblioth. Orient. Vatican.* tom. ii. p. 47, 321. Euseb. Renaudot, *Historia Patriarch. Alexandrinor.* p. 127, 129, 130, 135, 138, &c.

^g Evagrius, *Hist. Ecclesiast.* lib. iii. cap. xxxiii. Cyrilles, *vita Sabæ in Jo. Bapt. Cotelieri Monument. Ecclesiæ Græcæ*, tom. iii. p. 312. Bayle's *Dictionary* at the article Anastasius.

^h See Abulpharaii *Series Patriarch. Antiochen.* in Asseman. *Biblioth. Orient. Vatican.* tom. ii. p. 323.

sect to its former prosperity and lustre.ⁱ This poor monk, the grandeur of whose views was much above the obscurity of his station, and whose fortitude and patience no dangers could daunt, nor any labours exhaust, was ordained to the episcopal office by a handful of captive bishops, travelled on foot through the whole east, established bishops and presbyters every where, revived the drooping spirits of the Monophysites, and produced such an astonishing change in their affairs by the power of his eloquence, and by his incredible activity and diligence, that when he died bishop of Edessa, A. D. 588, he left his sect in a most flourishing state in Syria, Mesopotamia, Armenia, Egypt, Nubia, Abyssinia, and other countries.^k This dexterous monk had prudence to contrive the means of success, as well as activity to put them in execution; for he almost totally extinguished all the animosities, and reconciled all the factions, that had divided the Monophysites; and when their churches grew so numerous in the east that they could not all be conveniently comprehended under the sole jurisdiction of the patriarch of Antioch, he appointed as his assistant the primate of the east, whose residence was at Tagritis, on the borders of Armenia.^l The laborious efforts of Jacob were seconded in Egypt, and the adjacent countries, by Theodosius, bishop of Alexandria; and he became so famous that all the Monophysites of the east considered him as their second parent and founder, and are to this day called Jacobites in honour of their new chief.

VII. Thus it happened, that by the imprudent zeal and violence which the Greeks employed in defending the truth, the Monophysites gained considerable advantages, and at length obtained a solid and permanent settlement. From this period their sect has been under the jurisdiction of the patriarchs of Alexandria and Antioch, who, notwithstanding the difference of opinion which subsists, with respect to some points, between

The state of
the Monophysites.

ⁱ See Asseman. *Biblioth. Orient. &c.* tom. ii. cap. viii. p. 62, 72, 326, 331, 414. Eusebii Renaud. *Hist. Patriarch. Alexandr.* p. 119, 133, 425, and the *Liturgia Orient.* tom. ii. p. 333, 342. Faustus Naironus, *Euoplia fidei Catholicæ ex Syrorum monumentis*, part i. p. 40, 41.

^k Concerning the Nubians and Abyssinians, see Asseman. *Biblioth. Orient. &c.* tom. ii. p. 330. Lobo, *Voyage d'Abyssinie*, tom. ii. p. 36. Ludolph. *Commentar. ad Historiam Æthiopicam*, p. 451, 461, 466.

^l Asseman. *Biblioth. Orient. Vatican.* tom. ii. p. 410, 414, 418. See also this learned writer's *Dissertatio de Monophysitis*, which is prefixed to the second volume of the work now cited.

the Syrian and Egyptian Monophysites, are extremely careful to maintain communion with each other both by letters and by the exchange of good offices. The primate of the Abyssines is subject to the patriarch of Alexandria; and the primate of the east, who resides at Tagritis, is under the jurisdiction of the patriarch of Antioch. The Armenians are ruled by a bishop of their own, and are distinguished by certain opinions and rites from the rest of the Monophysites.

VIII. The sect of the Monophysites, before it was thus happily established, was torn with factions and intestine disputes, and suffered, in a particular manner, from that nice and subtile controversy concerning *the body of Christ*, which was kindled at Alexandria. Julian, bishop of Halicarnassus, affirmed, A. D. 519, that the divine nature had so insinuated itself into the body of Christ, from the very moment of the Virgin's conception, that the body of our Lord changed its nature and became incorruptible. This opinion was also embraced by Caianus, bishop of Alexandria; from whom those who adopted it were called Caianists. They were, however, divided into three sects, two of which debated this question, Whether the body of Christ was *created*, or *increated*. While the third asserted that our Lord's body was indeed corruptible, but never actually corrupted, since the energy of the divine nature must have prevented its dissolution.

This sect was warmly opposed by Severus of Antioch, and Damianus, who maintained that the body of Christ, before his resurrection, was truly *corruptible*, i. e. subject to the affections and changes with which human nature is generally attended. Those who embraced the opinion of Julian, were called Aphthartodocetæ, Docetæ, Phantasiasts, and even Manicheans, because it was supposed to follow from their hypothesis, that Christ did not suffer in *reality*, but only in *appearance*, hunger and thirst, pain and death; and that he did not actually assume the common affections and properties of human nature. On the other hand, the votaries of Severus were distinguished by the names Phthartolatræ, Ktistolatræ, and Creaticolæ. This miserable controversy was carried on with great warmth under the reign of Justinian, who favoured the Aphthartodocetæ; soon after, it subsided gradually; and at length

was happily hushed in silence.^m Henias of Hierapolis struck out an hypothesis upon this knotty matter, which seemed equally remote from those of the contending parties; for he maintained that Christ had indeed truly suffered the various sensations to which humanity is exposed; but that he suffered them not in his *nature*, but by a submissive act of his *will*.ⁿ

ix. Some of the corrupticolæ, for so *they* were called who looked upon the body of Christ to be corruptible, particularly Themistius, a deacon of Alexandria, and Theodosius, a bishop of that city, were carried by the inconsiderate heat of controversy into another opinion, which produced new commotions in the church toward the conclusion of this century. They affirmed, that to the divine nature of Christ all things were known; but that from his human nature many things were concealed. The rest of the sect charged the authors of this opinion with imputing ignorance to the divine nature of Christ; since they held, in common with them, that there was but one nature in the Son of God. Hence the votaries of this new doctrine were called Agnoetæ;^o but their sect was so weak and ill supported, that notwithstanding their eloquence and activity, which seemed to promise better success, it gradually declined, and came to nothing.

x. From the controversies with the Monophysites arose the sect of the Tritheists, whose chief was John Ascusnage, a Syrian philosopher, and at the same time a Monophysite.^p This man imagined in the Deity three natures, or substances, absolutely equal in all respects, and joined together by no common *essence*; to which opinion his adversaries gave the name of tritheism. One of the warmest defenders of this doctrine was John Philoponus, an Alexandrian philosopher and grammarian of the highest reputation; and hence he has been considered by many as the author of this sect, whose members

^m Timotheus, *De receptione hæreticorum in Cotelerii Monumentis Ecclesiæ Græcæ*, tom. iii. p. 409. Liberatus, in *Breviario Controv.* cap. xx. Forbesii *Instructiones Historico Theologicæ*, lib. iii. cap. xviii. p. 108. Asseman. *Biblioth. Oriental.* tom. iii. part ii. p. 457.

ⁿ Asseman. *Biblioth. Orient. Vatic.* tom. ii. p. 22, and 168.

^o Jo. Bapt. Cotelerius, *Ad monumenta Ecclesiæ Græcæ*, tom. iii. p. 641. Mich. le Quien, *Ad Damascenum de hæresibus*, tom. i. p. 107. Forbes, *Instruction Historico Theolog.* lib. iii. cap. xix. p. 119. Photius, *Biblioth. Cod.* ccxxx. p. 882.

^p See Gregor. Abulpharaius in Asseman. *Biblioth. Orient.* tom. i. p. 328.

have consequently derived from him the title of Philoponists.^q

This sect was divided into two parties, the Philoponists and the Conoites; the latter of whom were so called from Conon, bishop of Tarsus, their chief.^r They agreed in the doctrine of *three persons* in the godhead, and differed only in their manner of explaining what the Scriptures taught concerning the resurrection of the body. Philoponus maintained that the *form*, as well as the *matter* of all bodies was *generated* and *corrupted*, and that both therefore were to be restored in the resurrection. Conon held, on the contrary, that the body never lost its *form*: that its *matter* alone was subject to corruption and decay, and was consequently to be restored when *this mortal shall put on immortality*.

A third faction was that of the Damianists, who were so called from Damian, bishop of Alexandria, and whose opinion concerning the trinity was different from those already mentioned. They distinguished the *divine essence* from the *three persons*, viz. the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. They denied that each person was God, when considered in itself and abstractedly from the other two; but they affirmed, at the same time, that there was a *common divinity*, by the joint participation of which each person was God. They therefore called the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, hypostases, or persons, and the *godhead*, which was common to them all, *substance* or *nature*.^s

^q See Fabricii *Biblioth. Græc.* lib. v. cap. xxxvii. p. 358. Harduini *Concilia*, tom. iii. p. 1288. Timotheus, *De-receptione hæreticorum in Cotelarii Monumenta Ecclesie Græcæ*, tom. iii. p. 414. Jo. Damascenus, *De hæresibus*, tom. i. opp. p. 103, edit. Le Quien.

^r Photii *Biblioth. Cod.* xxiv. Asseman. *Biblioth. Orient. Vatican.* tom. ii. p. 329.

^s Jos. Sim. Asseman. *Biblioth. Orient. Vatican.* tom. ii. 78, 332, &c.

THE SEVENTH CENTURY.

PART I.

EXTERNAL HISTORY OF THE CHURCH.

CHAPTER I.

CONCERNING THE PROSPEROUS EVENTS WHICH HAPPENED TO THE CHURCH DURING THIS CENTURY.

I. IN this century the progress of Christianity was mightily accelerated both in the eastern and western hemispheres, and its divine light was diffused far and wide through the darkened nations. The Nestorians, who dwelt in Syria, Persia, and India, contributed much to its propagation in the east, by the zeal and diligence, the laborious efforts and indefatigable assiduity, with which they preached it to these fierce and barbarous nations, who lived in the remotest borders and deserts of Asia, and among whom, as we learn from authentic records, their ministry was crowned with remarkable success. It was by the labours of this sect, that the light of the gospel first penetrated into the immense empire of China, about the year 637, when Jesuiabas of Gadala was at the head of the Nestorians, as will appear probable to those who look upon as genuine the famous Chinese monument, which was discovered at Siganfu, by the Jesuits during the last century.^a Some, indeed, look upon this monument to be a mere forgery of the Jesuits, though perhaps without reason ; there are, however, other unexceptionable

The Christian religion introduced into China.

^a This celebrated monument has been published and explained by several learned writers, particularly by Kircher, in his *China Illustrata*, p. 53 ; by Muller, in a treatise published at Berlin in 1672 ; by Eusebe Renaudot, in his *Relations anciennes des Indes et de la Chine, de deux voyageurs Mahometans*, p. 228—271, published at Paris in the year 1718, in 8vo.; and by Assemani, *Biblioth. Orient. Clement. Vatican.* tom. iii. part ii. cap. iv. § 7. p. 535. We were promised a still more accurate edition of this famous monument by the learned Theoph. Sigifred Bayer, the greatest proficient of this age in Chinese erudition ; but his death has blasted our expectations. For my part, I see no reason to doubt of the genuineness of this monument, nor can I understand what advantage could redound to the Jesuits from the invention of such a fable. See Liron. *Singularités Historiques et Littéraires*, tom. ii. p. 500.

proofs, that the northern parts of China, even before this century, abounded with Christians, who for many succeeding ages, were under the inspection of a Metropolitan sent them by the Chaldean or Nestorian patriarch.^b

II. The attention and activity of the Greeks were so entirely occupied by their intestine divisions, that they were little solicitous about the progress of Christianity. In the west, Augustin laboured to extend the limits of the church, and to spread the light of the gospel among the Anglo-Saxons; and, after his death, other monks were sent from Rome to exert themselves in the same glorious cause. Their efforts were attended with the desired success, and the efficacy of their labours was manifested in the conversion of the six Anglo-Saxon kings, who had hitherto remained under the darkness of the ancient superstitions, to the Christian faith, which gained ground by degrees, and was at length embraced universally throughout all Britain.^c We are not however to imagine, that this universal change in favour of Christianity was wholly due to the discourses of the Roman monks and doctors; for other causes were certainly instrumental in accomplishing this great event. And it is not to be doubted, that the influence which some Christian queens, and ladies of high distinction had over their husbands, and the pains they took to convert them to Christianity, as also the severe and rigorous laws that were afterward enacted against idolaters,^d contributed much to the progress of the gospel.

^b See Renaudot, l. c. p. 56, 68, &c. Assemani *Biblioth. &c.* cap. ix. p. 522; the learned Bayer, in his preface to his *Museum Sinicum*, p. 84, assures us, that he has in his hands such proofs of the truth of what is here affirmed, as puts the matter beyond all doubt. ¶ See on this subject a very learned dissertation published by M. de Guignes in the xxxth. vol. of the *Memoires de Literature tires des Registres de l'Academie Royale des Inscriptions et des Belles Lettres*, in which he proves that the Christians were settled in China so early as the seventh century. He remarks, indeed, that the Nestorians and other Christians were for a long time confounded in the Chinese annals with the worshippers of Fo, an Indian idol, whose rights were introduced into China about sixty-five years after the birth of Christ; and that this circumstance has deceived De la Croze, Beausobre, and some other learned men, who have raised specious objections against the hypothesis that maintains the early introduction of Christianity into this great empire. A reader properly informed will lend little or no attention to the account given of this matter by Voltaire in the first volume of his *Essai sur l'Histoire Generale*, &c. A poet, who recounts facts, or denies them, without deigning to produce his authorities, must not expect to meet with the credit that is due to a historian.

^c Bedæ *Historia Ecclesiast. Gentis Anglor.* lib. ii. cap. iii. p. 91, cap. xiv. p. 116, lib. iii. cap. xxi. p. 162, &c. edit. Chifletii. Rapin Thoyras, tom. i. p. 227.

^d Wilkins's *Concilia Magnæ Britanniae*, tom. i. p. 222.

III. Many of the British, Scotch, and Irish ecclesiastics travelled among the Batavian, Belgic, and German nations, with the pious intention of propagating the knowledge of the truth, and of erecting churches and forming religious establishments every where. This was the true reason which induced the Germans, in after times, to found so many convents for the Scotch and Irish, of which some are yet in being.^e

As also the Gauls, the Suevi, the Frieslanders, the Franks, and the Helvetii.

Columban, an Irish monk, seconded by the labours of a few companions, had happily extirpated in the preceding century the ancient superstitions in Gaul, and the parts adjacent, where idolatry had taken the deepest root; he also carried the lamp of celestial truth among the Suevi, the Boii, the Franks, and other German nations,^f and persevered in these pious and useful labours until his death, which happened, A. D. 615. St. Gal, who was one of his companions, preached the gospel to the Helvetii, and the Suevi.^g St. Kilian set out from Scotland, the place of his nativity, and exercised the ministerial function with such success among the eastern Franks, that vast numbers of them embraced Christianity.^h Toward the conclusion of this century, the famous Willebrord, by birth an Anglo-Saxon, accompanied with eleven of his countrymen, viz. Suidbert, Wigbert, Acca, Wilibald, Unibald, Lebwin, the two Ewalds, Werenfrid, Marcellin, and Adalbert, crossed over into Batavia, which lay opposite to Britain, in order to convert the Frieslanders to the religion of Jesus. From thence, in the year 692, they went into Fosteland, which most writers look upon to have been the same with the isle of Helgoland or Heiligland; but being cruelly treated there by Radbod, king of the Frieslanders, who put Wigbert, one of the company, to death, they departed hence for Cimbria, and the adjacent parts of Denmark. They however returned to Friesland, A. D. 693, and were much more successful than they had formerly been in opposing the ancient superstitions, and propagating the knowledge of the truth. Willebrord was ordained by

^e See the *Acta Sanctorum*, tom. ii. Febr. p. 362.

^f Mabillon, *Actæ Sanctor. Ordinis Benedicti*, tom. ii. p. 560, tom. iii. p. 72, 339, 500. Adamanni, lib. iii. *De S. Columbano*, in *Canisii Lection. Antiq.* tom. i. p. 674.

^g Walafridi Strabonis *vit. S. Galli* in Mabillon, *Actis S. Ord. Benedict.* tom. ii. p. 225. *Canisii Lection. Antiq.* tom. i. p. 783.

^h *Vita S. Kiliani* in *Canisii Lection. Antiq.* tom. iii. p. 171. Jo. Pet. de Ludewig, *criptores rerum Wurzburgens.* p. 966.

the Roman pontiff, archbishop of Wilteburg, now Utrecht, and died among the Batavians in a good old age; while his associates continued to spread the light of the gospel among the Westphalians, and the neighbouring countries.ⁱ

iv. These voyages, and many others undertaken in the cause of Christ, carry, no doubt, a specious appearance of piety and zeal; but the impartial and attentive inquirer after truth will find it impossible to form the same favourable judgment of them all, or to applaud without distinction the motives that animated these laborious missionaries. That the designs of some of them were truly pious, and their characters without reproach, is unquestionably certain; but it is equally certain that this was neither the case of them all, nor even of the greatest part of them. Many of them discovered, in the course of their ministry, the most turbulent passions, and dishonoured the glorious cause in which they were engaged, by their arrogance and ambition, their avarice and cruelty. They abused the power which they had received from the Roman pontiffs, of forming religious establishments among the superstitious nations; and instead of gaining souls to Christ, they usurped a despotic dominion over their obsequious proselytes; and exercised a princely authority over the countries where their ministry had been successful. Nor are we to consider as entirely groundless, the suspicions of those who allege that many of the monks, desirous of rule and authority, concealed their vices under the mask of religion, and endured, for a certain time, the austerities of a rigid mortification and abstinence, merely with a view to rise in the church to the episcopal dignity.

v. The conversion of the Jews seemed at a stand in this century; few or none of that obstinate nation embraced the gospel in consequence of an inward conviction of its truth, though in many places they were barbarously compelled by the Christians to make an outward and feigned profession of their faith in Christ. The emperor Heraclius, incensed against that miserable people by the insinuations, as it is said, of the Christian doctors, persecuted them in a cruel manner, and ordered

The Jews
compelled to
embrace
Christianity.

ⁱ Alcuini *vita Willibrordi* in Mabillon. *Actis SS. Ord. Benedict. Sæc. iii. pars i. p. 603.*
Jo. Molleri *Cimbria Literata*, tom. ii. p. 280.

multitudes of them to be inhumanly dragged into the Christian churches, in order to be baptized by violence and compulsion.^k The same odious method of converting was practised in Spain and Gaul, by the monarchs of those nations, against which even the bishops of Rome expressed their displeasure and indignation. Such were the horrid and abominable practices to which an ignorance of the true spirit of Christianity, and the barbarous genius of this age, led the heralds of that divine religion which was designed to spread abroad *charity* upon earth, and to render mankind truly and rationally *free*.

CHAPTER II.

CONCERNING THE CALAMITOUS EVENTS WHICH HAPPENED TO THE CHURCH DURING THIS CENTURY.

I. THE Christians suffered less in this than in the preceding centuries. They were sometimes persecuted by the Persian monarchs, but still recovered their former tranquillity after transitory scenes of violence and oppression. In England, the new converts to Christianity suffered various calamities under the petty kings, who governed in those boisterous times; but these kings embraced the gospel themselves, and then the sufferings of the Christians ceased. In the eastern countries, and particularly in Syria and Palestine, the Jews, at certain times, attacked the Christians with a merciless fury;^l but, however, with so little success, that they always had reason to repent of their temerity, which was severely chastised. It is true, the church had other enemies, even those who, under the treacherous profession of Christianity, were laying secret schemes for the restoration of paganism; but they were too weak and too inconsiderable to form any attempts that could endanger the Christian cause.

II. But a new and most powerful enemy to the Christian cause started up in Arabia, A. D. 612, under the reign of Heraclius. This was Mahomet, an illiterate man,^m but endowed by nature with the most flowing

Mahomet appears.

^k Eutychiei *Annales Ecclesiast. Alexandr.* tom. ii. p. 212.

^l Eutychiei *Annales*, tom. ii. p. 236. Jo. Henr. Hottingeri *Historia Orientalis*, lib. i. cap. iii. p. 129.

^m Mahomet himself expressly declared that he was totally ignorant of all branches

and attractive eloquence, and with a vast and penetrating genius," distinguished also by the advantages he enjoyed from the place of his birth, which added a lustre to his name and his undertakings. This adventurous impostor declared publicly, that he was commissioned by God to destroy polytheism and idolatry, and then to reform, first the religion of the Arabians, and afterward the Jewish and Christian worship. For these purposes he delivered a new law, which is known by the name of the Koran," or Alcoran; and having gained several victories over his enemies, he compelled an incredible multitude of persons, both in Arabia and the neighbouring nations, to receive his doctrine, and range themselves under his standards. Elated with this rapid and unexpected success, he extended yet further his ambitious views, and formed the vast and arduous project of founding an empire. Here again success crowned his adventurous efforts; and his plan was executed with such intrepidity and impudence, that he died master of all Arabia, beside several adjacent provinces.

III. It is perhaps impossible, at this time, to form such an

of learning and science, and was even unable either to write or read; and his followers have drawn from this ignorance an argument in favour of the divinity of his mission and of the religion he taught. It is, however, scarcely credible that his ignorance was such as it is here described, and several of his sect have called in question the declarations of their chief relating to this point. See Chardin, *Voyages en Perse*, tom. iv. p. 33, 34. If we consider that Mahomet carried on for a considerable time a successful commerce in Arabia and the adjacent countries, this alone will convince us that he must have been, in some measure, instructed in the arts of reading, writing, and arithmetic, with the knowledge of which a merchant cannot dispense.

n The writers to whom we are indebted for accounts of the life and religion of Mahomet, are enumerated by Fabricius in his *Delectus et Syllabus argument. pro veritate relig. Christianæ*, cap. l. p. 733. To which we may add, Boulainvilliers, *Vie de Mahomet*, published at London, in 8vo. in the year 1730, and which deserves rather the character of a romance than a history. Gagnier, *Vie de Mahomet*, printed at Amsterdam, in two volumes, 8vo. in 1732, and commendable both for the learning and candour with which it appears to have been composed; and above all the most learned and judicious Sale's *Preliminary Discourse*, prefixed to his *English translation of the Koran*, § 2 p. 37.

o For an account of the Koran, see principally the learned Sale's preface to his *English translation* of that work. See also Vertot's *Discours sur l'Alcoran*, which is subjoined to the third volume of his *History of the Knights of Malta*, and Chardin's *Voyages en Perse*, tom. ii. p. 281. The book which the Mahometans call the Koran, or Alcoran, is composed of several papers and discourses of Mahomet, which were discovered and collected after his death, and is by no means that same law whose excellence Mahomet vaunted so highly. That some parts of the true Koran may be copied in the modern one, is indeed very possible; but that the Koran or Law, given by Mahomet to the Arabians, is entirely distinct from the modern Alcoran, is manifest from this, that in the latter Mahomet appeals to and extols the former, and therefore they must be two different compositions. May it not be conjectured, that the true Koran was an Arabic poem, which Mahomet recited to his followers without giving it to them in writing, ordering them only to commit it to their memory? Such were the laws of the Druids in Gaul, and such also those of the Indians, which the Brahmins receive by oral tradition, and get by heart.

accurate judgment of the character, views, and conduct of Mahomet, as would entirely satisfy the curiosity of a sagacious inquirer after truth. To give entire credit to the Grecian writers in this matter, is neither prudent nor safe, since their bitter resentment against this hostile invader led them to invent, without scruple or hesitation, fables and calumnies to blacken his character. The Arabians, on the other hand, are as little to be trusted to; as their historians are destitute of veracity and candour, conceal the vices and enormities of their chief, and represent him as the most divine person that ever appeared upon earth, and as the best gift of God to the world. Add to this, that a considerable part of Mahomet's life, and indeed that part of it that would be the most proper to lead us to a true knowledge of his character, and of the motives from which he acted, is absolutely unknown. It is highly probable that he was so deeply affected with the odious and abominable superstition which dishonoured his country, that it threw him into a certain fanatical disorder of mind, and made him really imagine that he was supernaturally commissioned to reform the religion of the Arabians, and to restore among them the worship of one God. It is, however, at the same time, undoubtedly evident, that when he saw his enterprise crowned with the desired success, he made use of impious frauds to establish the work he had so happily begun, deluded the giddy and credulous multitude by various artifices, and even forged celestial visions to confirm his authority, and remove the difficulties that frequently arose in the course of his affairs. This mixture of imposture is by no means incompatible with a spirit of enthusiasm; for the fanatic, through the unguided warmth of zeal, looks often upon the artifices that are useful to his cause, as pious and acceptable to the Supreme Being; and therefore deceives when he can do it with impunity.^p The religion which Mahomet taught, is certainly different from what it would have been, if he had met with no opposition in the propagation of his opinions. The difficulties he had to encounter obliged him to yield, in some respects, to the reigning

What judgment we are to form of Mahomet.

^p This, methinks, is the best way of adjusting the controversy that has been carried on by some learned men upon this curious question, viz. Whether Mahomet was a fanatic or an impostor. See Bayle's *Dictionary*, at the article Mahomet. Ockley's *Conquest of Syria, Persia, and Egypt, by the Saracens*, vol. i. p. 62. Sale's preface to his translation of the *Alcoran*, § 2, p. 39.

systems ; the obstinate attachment of the Arabians to the religion of their ancestors, on the one hand, and the fond hope of gaining over to his cause both the Jews and Christians on the other, engaged, no doubt, this fanatical impostor to admit into his system several tenets which he would have rejected without hesitation, had he been free from the restraints of ambition and artifice.

IV. The rapid success which attended the propagation of this new religion, was owing to causes that are plain and evident, and must remove, or rather prevent our surprise, when they are attentively considered. The terror of Mahomet's arms, and the repeated victories which were gained by him and his successors, were no doubt the irresistible argument that persuaded such multitudes to embrace his religion and submit to his dominion. Beside, his law was artfully and marvellously adapted to the corrupt nature of man ; and in a more particular manner to the manners and opinions of the eastern nations, and the vices to which they were naturally addicted ; for the articles of faith which it proposed were few in number, and extremely simple ; and the duties it required were neither many nor difficult, nor such as were incompatible with the empire of appetites and passions." It is to be observed further, that the gross ignorance under which the Arabians, Syrians, Persians, and the greatest part of the eastern nations laboured, at this time, rendered many an easy prey to the artifice and eloquence of this bold adventurer. To these causes of the progress of Mahometism, we may add the bitter dissensions and cruel animosities that reigned among the Christian sects, particularly the Greeks, Nestorians, Eutychians, and Monophysites, dissensions that filled a great part of the east with carnage, assassinations, and such detestable enormities, as rendered the very name of Christianity odious to many. We might add here, that the Monophysites and Nestorians, full of resentment against the Greeks, from whom they had suffered the bitterest and most injurious treatment, assisted the Arabians in the conquest of several provinces, into which, of consequence, the religion of Mahomet was afterward introduced. Other causes of the

q See Reland, *De religione Mahomedica*. Sale's *Preliminary Discourse*.

r See Ockley's *Conquest of Syria, Persia, and Egypt, by the Saracens*, the first part of which was published at London in the year 1708. and the second in 1717.

sudden progress of that religion, will naturally occur to such as consider attentively its spirit and genius, and the state of the world at this time.

v. After the death of Mahomet, which happened, A. D. 632, his followers, led on by an amazing intrepidity, and a fanatical fury, and assisted, as we have already observed, by those Christians whom the Greeks had treated with such severity, extended their conquests beyond the limits of Arabia, and subdued Syria, Persia, Egypt, and other countries under their dominion. On the other hand, the Greeks, exhausted with civil discords, and wholly occupied by intestine troubles, were unable to stop these intrepid conquerors in their rapid career.

The treatment which the Christians received from the Mahometans

For some time these enthusiastic invaders used their prosperity with moderation, and treated the Christians, and particularly those among them who rejected the decrees of the councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon, with the utmost indulgence and lenity. But as an uninterrupted course of success and prosperity renders, too generally, corrupt mortals insolent and imperious, so the moderation of this victorious sect degenerated by degrees into severity; and they treated the Christians, at length, rather like slaves than citizens, loading them with insupportable taxes, and obliging them to submit to a variety of vexatious and oppressive measures.

vi. The progress however of this triumphant sect received a considerable check by the civil dissensions which arose among them immediately after the death of Mahomet. Abubeker and Ali, the former the father-in-law, and the latter the son-in-law of this pretended prophet, aspired both to succeed him in the empire which he had erected. Upon this arose a tedious and cruel contest whose flame reached to succeeding ages, and produced that schism which divided the Mahometans into two great factions, whose separation not only gave rise to a variety of opinions and rites, but also excited the most implacable hatred, and the most deadly animosities. Of these factions, the one acknowledged Abubeker as the true *calif*, or successor of Mahomet, and its members were distinguished by the name of Sonnites; while the other adhered to Ali, and were known by the title of Schiites.^s

The Mahometans divided.

^s See Reland, *De religione Turcica*, lib. i. p. 36, 70, 74, 85. Chardin's *Voyages en Perse* tom. ii. p. 236.

Both however adhered to the Alcoran as a divine law, and the rule of faith and manners ; to which indeed the former added, by way of interpretation, the *sonna*, i. e. a certain law which they looked upon as descended from Mahomet by oral tradition, and which the Schiites refused to admit. Among the Sonnites, or followers of Abubeker, we are to reckon the Turks, Tartars, Arabians, Africans, and the greatest part of the Indian Mahometans ; whereas the Persians and the subjects of the Grand Mogul are generally considered as the followers of Ali ; though the latter indeed seem rather to observe a strict neutrality in this contest.

Beside these two grand factions, there are other subordinate sects among the Mahometans, which dispute with warmth concerning several points of religion, though without violating the rules of mutual toleration.^t Of these sects there are four which far surpass the rest in point of reputation and importance.

^t For an account of the Mahometan sects, see Hottinger, *Histor. Orient.* lib. ii. cap. vi. p. 340. Ricaut, *Etat. de l'Empire Ottoman.* livr. ii. p. 242. Chardin's *Voyages en Perse*, tom. ii. p. 263. Sale's *Preliminary Discourse*, § 8, p. 151.

PART II.

INTERNAL HISTORY OF THE CHURCH.

CHAPTER I.

CONCERNING THE STATE OF LETTERS AND PHILOSOPHY DURING THIS CENTURY.

I. NOTHING can equal the ignorance and darkness that reigned in this century; the most impartial and accurate account of which will appear incredible The state of learning. to those who are unacquainted with the productions of this barbarous period. Any remains of learning and philosophy that yet survived, were, a few particular cases excepted, to be found principally among the Latins, in the obscure retreats of cloistered monks. The monastic institutions prohibited the election of any abbot to the head of a convent, who was not a man of learning, or at least endowed with a tolerable measure of the erudition of the times. The monks were obliged to consecrate certain hours every day to reading and study; and, that they might improve this appointment to the most advantageous purposes, there were in most of the monasteries, stated times marked out, at which they were to assemble, in order to communicate to each other the fruits of their study, and to discuss the matters upon which they had been reading.^a The youth also who were destined for the service of the church, were obliged to prepare themselves for their ministry by a diligent application to study; and in this they were directed by the monks, one of whose principal occupations it was to preside over the education of the rising priesthood.

It must however be acknowledged, that all these institutions were of little use to the advancement of solid learning, or of rational theology, because very few in these days were acquainted with the true nature of the liberal arts and sciences, or with the important ends which they were adapted to serve; and the greatest part of those who were

^a See Mabillon, *Acta S. S. Ord. Benedicti*, tom. ii. p. 479, 513.

looked upon as learned men, threw away their time in reading the marvellous lives of a parcel of fanatical saints instead of employing it in the perusal of well-chosen and excellent authors. They who distinguished themselves most by their taste and genius, carried their studies little farther than the works of Augustin and Gregory the Great; and it is of scraps collected out of these two writers, and patched together without much uniformity, that the best productions of this century are entirely composed.

II. The sciences enjoyed no degree of protection at this time, from kings and princes, nor did they owe any thing to men of high and eminent stations in the empire. On the other hand, the schools which had been committed to the care and inspection of the bishops, whose ignorance and indolence were now become enormous, began to decline apace, and were, in many places, fallen into ruin.^b The bishops in general were so illiterate, that few of that body were capable of composing the discourses which they delivered to the people. Such of them as were not totally destitute of genius, composed out of the writings of Augustin and Gregory a certain number of insipid homilies, which they divided between themselves and their stupid colleagues, that they might not be obliged, through incapacity, to discontinue preaching the doctrines of Christianity to their people, as appears evident by the examples of Cæsarius, bishop of Arles, and Eloi, bishop of Noyon.^c There is yet extant a summary of theological doctrine, which was unskilfully compiled by Taion, bishop of Saragossa, from the writings of Augustin and Gregory; and which was so highly exalted in this illiterate age, that its author was called, by the rest of the bishops, the *true salt of the earth*, and a divine light that was sent to illuminate the world.^d Many such instances of the ignorance and barbarity of this century will occur to those who have any acquaintance with the writers it produced. England, it is true, was happier in this respect than the other nations of Europe, which was principally owing to Theodore of Tarsus, of whom we shall have occasion to speak afterward, who was appointed archbishop of Can-

^b *Histoire Littéraire de la France*, tom. iii. p. 428.

^c In the original we read Eligius *Noviomagensis*, which is a mistake either of the author, or printer. It is probable that *Noviomagensis* has slipped from the pen of Dr. Mosheim, in the place of *Noviodunensis*; for Eloi was bishop of Noyon, and not of Nimeguen.

^d Mabillon, *Analecta veteris gri.* tom. i. p. 42.

terbury, and contributed much to introduce among the English a certain taste for literary pursuits, and to excite in that kingdom a zeal for the advancement of learning.^e

III. In Greece the fate of the sciences was truly lamentable. A turgid eloquence, and an affected pomp and splendour of style, which cast a perplexing obscurity over subjects in themselves the most clear and perspicuous, was now the highest point of perfection to which both prose writers and poets aspired. The Latin eloquence was still vastly below that of the Greeks; it had not spirit enough even to be turgid, and, a few compositions excepted, was sunk to the very lowest degree of barbarity and corruption. Both the Greek and Latin writers, who attempted historical compositions, degraded most miserably that important science. Moschus and Sophronius among the former; and among the latter Braulio, Jonas, a Hibernian, Audoenus, Dado, and Adamannus, wrote the lives of several saints; or rather a heap of insipid and ridiculous fables, void of the least air of probability, and without the smallest tincture of eloquence. The Greeks related without discernment or choice the most vulgar reports that were handed about, concerning the events of ancient times; and hence that multitude of absurd fables, which the Latins afterward copied from them with the utmost avidity.

The sciences and the art of writing sunk into barbarity and corruption.

IV. Among the Latins philosophy was at its lowest ebb. If there were any that retained some faint reluctance to abandon it entirely, such confined their studies to the writings of Boetius and Cassiodorus, from which they committed to memory a certain number of phrases and sentences; and that was all their philosophical stock. The Greeks, abandoning Plato to the monks, gave themselves entirely up to the direction of Aristotle, and studied with eagerness the subtilties of his logic, which were of signal use in the controversies carried on between the Monophysites, the Nestorians, and Monothelites. All these different sects called the stagirite to their assistance, when they were to plead their cause, and to defend their doctrines. Hence it was that James, bishop of Edessa, who was a Monophysite, translated in this century the dialectics of Aristotle into the Syriac language.^f

The fate of philosophy.

^e Wilkins's *Concilia Magnæ Britanniae*, tom. i. p. 42. Conringii *Antiquitat. Academicæ*, p. 277.

^f See Assemani *Biblioth. Oriental. Vatican.* tom. i. p. 498.

CHAPTER II.

CONCERNING THE DOCTORS AND MINISTERS OF THE CHURCH, AND ITS FORM OF GOVERNMENT DURING THIS CENTURY.

I. THE disputes about pre-eminence that had so long subsisted between the bishops of Rome and Constantinople, proceeded in this century to such violent lengths, as laid the foundations of that deplorable schism, which afterward separated the Greek and Latin churches. The most learned writers, and those who are most remarkable for their knowledge of antiquity, are generally agreed that Boniface III. engaged Phocas, that abominable tyrant, who waded to the imperial throne through the blood of the emperor Mauritius, to take from the bishop of Constantinople the title of *œcumenical* or *universal bishop*, and to confer it upon the Roman pontiff. They relate this, however, upon the sole authority of Baronius; for none of the ancient writers have mentioned it. If indeed we are to give credit to Anastasius and Paul Deacon,^g something like what we have now related was transacted by Phocas; for when the bishops of Constantinople maintained that their church was not only equal in dignity and authority to that of Rome, but also the head of all the Christian churches, this tyrant opposed their pretensions, and granted the pre-eminence to the church of Rome; and thus was the papal supremacy first introduced.

II. The Roman pontiffs used all sorts of methods to maintain and enlarge the authority and pre-eminence which they had acquired by a grant from the most odious tyrant that ever disgraced the annals of history. We find however in the most authentic accounts of the transactions of this century, that not only several emperors and princes, but also whole nations opposed the ambitious views of the bishops of Rome. The Byzantine history, and the *Formulary* of Marculfus contain many proofs of the influence which the civil magistrate yet retained in religious matters, and of the subordination of the Roman pontiffs to the regal authority. It is true the Roman writers affirm,

The supremacy of the former opposed by many.

^g Anastasius, *De vitis Pontificum*. Paul Diacon. *De rebus gestis Longobard.* lib. iv. cap. xxxvii. in *Muratorii Scriptor. rerum Italicar.* tom. i. part i. p. 46.

that Constantine Pogonatus abdicated the privilege of confirming, by his approbation, the election of the bishop of that city ; and, as a proof of this, they allege a passage of Anastasius, in which it is said, that according to an edict of Pogonatus, *the pontiff who should be elected, was to be ordained immediately and without the least delay.*^k But every one must see that this passage is insufficient to prove what these writers assert with such confidence. It is, however, certain, that this emperor abated, some say remitted the sum which, since the time of Theodoric, the bishops of Rome had been obliged to pay into the imperial treasury before they could be ordained, or have their election confirmed.^l

The ancient Britons and Scots persisted long in the maintenance of their religious liberty ; and neither the threats nor promises of the legates of Rome could engage them to submit to the decrees and authority of the ambitious pontiff, as appears manifestly from the testimony of Bede. The churches of Gaul and Spain attributed as much authority to the bishop of Rome, as they thought suitable to their own dignity, and consistent with their interests ; nay, even in Italy, his supreme authority was obstinately rejected, since the bishop of Ravenna, and other prelates, refused an implicit submission to his orders.^k Beside all this, multitudes of private persons expressed publicly, and without the least hesitation, their abhorrence of the vices, and particularly of the lordly ambition of the Roman pontiffs ; and it is highly probable that the Waldenses, or Vaudois, had already, in this century, retired into the valleys of Piedmont, that they might be more at their liberty to oppose the tyranny of those imperious prelates.^l

III. The progress of vice among the subordinate rulers and ministers of the church was, at this time, truly deplorable ; neither bishops, presbyters, deacons, nor even the cloistered monks, were exempt from the ge-

Vices of the clergy.

^k Anastasii vit. Pontif. in Bened. p. 146, in Muratorii Scriptor. rerum Italicar. tom. iii.

^l Anastas. vit. Pontif. in Agathone, p. 144, compared with Mascovii Hist. German. tom. ii. p. 121, in the annotations. It will not be amiss to observe here, that by the same edict, which diminished the ordination money paid by the bishops of Rome to the emperor, Constantine resumed the power of confirming the election of the pope, which his predecessors had invested in the exarchs of Ravenna ; so that the bishop elect was not to be ordained till his election was notified to the court of Constantinople, and the imperial decree confirming it was received by the electors at Rome. See Anastasius in his life of Agatho.

^k See Geddes's *Miscellaneous Tracts*, tom. ii. p. 6.

^l See Antoine Leger's *Histoire des Eglises Vaudoises*, livr. i. p. 15.

neral contagion, as appears from the unanimous confession of all the writers of this century that are worthy of credit. In those very places that were consecrated to the advancement of piety, and the service of God, there was little else to be seen than ghostly ambition, insatiable avarice, pious frauds, intolerable pride, and a supercilious contempt of the natural rights of the people, with many other vices still more enormous. There reigned also in many places the most bitter dissensions between the bishops and the monks. The former had employed the greedy hands of the latter to augment the episcopal treasure, and to draw contributions from all parts to support them in their luxury, and the indulgence of their lusts. The monks perceiving this, and also unwilling to serve the bishops in such a dishonourable character, fled for refuge to the emperors and princes, under whose civil jurisdiction they lived; and afterward, for their further security, had recourse to the protection of the Roman pontiff.^m This protection they readily obtained, and the imperious pontiffs, always fond of exerting their authority, exempted, by degrees, the monastic orders from the jurisdiction of the bishops. The monks, in return for this important service, devoted themselves wholly to advance the interests, and to maintain the dignity of the bishop of Rome. They made his cause their own, and represented him as a sort of god to the ignorant multitude, over whom they had gained a prodigious ascendant, by the notion that generally prevailed of the sanctity of the monastic order. It is at the same time to be observed that this *immunity* of the monks was a fruitful source of licentiousness and disorder, and occasioned the greatest part of the vices with which they were afterward so justly charged. Such, at least, is the judgment of the best writers upon this subject.ⁿ

iv. In the mean time the monks were every where in high repute, and their cause was accompanied with the most surprising success, particularly among the Latins, through the protection and favour of the Roman pontiff, and their pharisaical affectation of uncommon piety and

The state of
the monks.

^m See Launoii *Assertio inquisitionis in Chartam Immunitatis S. Germani*, opp. tom. iii. part i. p. 50. Baluzii *Miscellan.* tom. ii. p. 159, tom. iv. p. 108. Muratorii *Antiq. Italic.* tom. ii. p. 944, 949.

ⁿ See Launoii *Examen privilegii S. Germani*, tom. iii. part i. p. 292. Wilkins's *Concilia Magnæ Britannicæ*, tom. i. p. 43, 44, 49, &c.

devotion. The heads of families, striving to surpass each other in their zeal for the propagation and advancement of monkery, dedicated their children to God, by shutting them up in convents, and devoting them to a solitary life, which they looked upon as the highest felicity; nor did they fail to send with these innocent victims a rich dowry. Abandoned profligates, who had passed their days in the most enormous pursuits, and whose guilty consciences filled them with terror and remorse, were comforted with the delusive hopes of obtaining pardon, and making atonement for their crimes, by leaving the greatest part of their fortune to some monastic society. Multitudes, impelled by the unnatural dictates of a gloomy superstition, deprived their children of fertile lands and rich patrimonies, in favour of the monks, by whose prayers they hoped to render the Deity propitious. Several ecclesiastics laid down rules for the direction of the monastic orders. Those among the Latins, who undertook this pious task, were Fructuosus, Isidore, Johannes Gerundinensis, and Columba.^p The rule of discipline prescribed by St. Benedict, was not as yet so universally followed as to exclude all others.

v. The writers of this age, who distinguished themselves by their genius or erudition, were very few in number. Among the Greeks, the first rank is due The Greek writers. to Maximus, a monk, who disputed with great obstinacy and warmth against the Monothelites, composed some illustrations upon the holy Scriptures, and was upon the whole a man of no mean capacity, though unhappy through the impatience and violence of his natural temper.

Isychius, bishop of Jerusalem, explained several books of Scripture;^q and left behind him several *Homilies* and some productions of less importance.

Dorotheus, abbot of Palestine, acquired a considerable name by his *Ascetic Dissertations*, in which he laid down a plan of monastic life and manners.

Antiochus, a monk of Seba in Palestine, and a monk of a very superstitious complexion, composed a *Pandect of the holy Scriptures*, i. e. a summary or system of the Christian doctrine, which is by no means worthy of the highest commendation.

o Gervais, *Histoire de l'Abbe Suger*, tom. i. p. 9—16.

p Lucæ Holstenii *Codex Regular*. tom. ii. p. 225.

q See Simon, *Critique de la Bibliothèque des Auteurs Ecclesiastiques de M. Du Pin*, tom. i. p. 261.

Sophronius, bishop of Jerusalem, was rendered illustrious, and attracted the veneration of succeeding ages, by the controversies he carried on against those who, at this time, were branded with the name of heretics; and particularly against the Monothelites, of whose doctrine he was the first opposer, and also the fomentor of the dispute which it occasioned.^r

There are yet extant several *Homilies*, attributed to Andrew, bishop of Crete, which are destitute of true piety and eloquence, and which are moreover considered by some writers as entirely spurious.

Gregory, surnamed Pisides, deacon of Constantinople, beside the *History of Heraclius and the Avars*, composed several poems, and other pieces of too little moment to deserve mention.

Theodore, abbot of Raithu, published a book, which is still extant, against those sects who seemed to introduce corrupt innovations into the Christian religion by their doctrine relating to the person of Christ.

VI. Among the Latin writers, a certain number were distinguished from the rest by their superior abilities. Ildefonse, archbishop of Toledo, was reputed for his learning; the Spaniards however attribute to him, without foundation, certain treatises concerning the Virgin Mary.^s

We have yet extant *two books of epistles*, written by Desiderius, bishop of Cahors, and published by the learned Canisius.

Eligius, or Eloi, bishop of Limoges, left behind him several *Homilies*, and some other productions.

Marculf, a Gallic monk, composed *two books of ecclesiastical forms*, which are highly valuable, as they are extremely proper to give us a just idea of the deplorable state of religion and learning in this century.^t

Aldhelm, an English prelate, composed several poems *concerning the Christian life*, which exhibit but indifferent marks of genius and fancy.^u

^r See the *Acta Sanctorum*, tom. ii. *Martii ad d. xi.* p. 65.

^s See the *Acta Sanctorum*, *Januar.* tom. ii. p. 535.

^t *Histoire Littéraire de la France*, tom. iii. p. 565.

^u This prelate certainly deserved a more honourable mention than is here made of him by Dr. Mosheim. His poetical talents were by no means the most distinguishing part of his character. He was profoundly versed in the Greek, Latin, and Saxon languages. He appeared also with dignity in the *pascal* controversy, that so long divided the Saxon and British churches. See Collier's *Ecclesiastical Hist.* vol. i. p. 121.

Julian Pomerius confuted the Jews, and acquired a name by several other productions, which are neither worthy of much applause nor of utter contempt. To all these we might add Cresconius, whose *abridgment of the canons* is well known; Fredegarius the historian, and a few others.

CHAPTER III.

CONCERNING THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH DURING THIS CENTURY.

I. IN this barbarous age, religion lay expiring under a motley and enormous heap of superstitious inventions, and had neither the courage nor the force to raise her head, or to display her native charms, to a darkened and deluded world. In the earlier periods of the church, the worship of Christians was confined to the one Supreme God, and his Son Jesus Christ; but the Christians of this century multiplied the objects of their devotion, and paid homage to the remains of the true cross, to the images of the saints, and to bones, whose real owners were extremely dubious.^w The primitive Christians, in order to excite men to a course of piety and virtue, set before them that heavenly state, and those mansions of misery, which the gospel has revealed as the different portions of the righteous and the wicked; while the Christians of this century talked of nothing else but a certain fire, which effaced the stains of vice, and purified souls from their corruption. The *former* taught that Christ, by his sufferings and death, had made atonement for the sins of mortals; the *latter* seemed, by their superstitious doctrine, to exclude from the kingdom of heaven, such as had

The deplorable state of religion.

^w It will not be amiss to quote here a remarkable passage out of *The Life of St. Eligius*, or Eloi, bishop of Noyon, which is to be found in Dacherius's *Spicilegium veter. Scriptor.* tom. ii. p. 92. This passage, which is very proper to give us a just idea of the piety of this age, is as follows: "Huic sanctissimo viro inter cetera virtutum suarum miracula id etiam a Domino concessum erat, ut sanctorum martyrum corpora, quæ per tot sæcula abdita populis hactenus habebantur, eo investigante ac nimio ardore fidei indagante, patefacta proderentur." It appears, by this passage, that St. Eloi was a zealous relic hunter, and if we may give credit to the writer of his life, he was very successful at this kind of game, for he smelt and unkenelled the carcasses of St. Quintin, St. Plato, St. Crispin, St. Crispinian, St. Lucian, and many more. The bishops of this age, who were either ambitiously desirous of popular applause, or intent upon accumulating riches, and filling their coffers with the oblations of a superstitious people, pretended to be endowed with a miraculous sagacity in discovering the bodies of saints and martyrs.

not contributed, by their offerings, to augment the riches of the clergy, or the church.^x The *former* were only studious to attain to a virtuous simplicity of life and manners, and employed their principal zeal and diligence in the culture of true and genuine piety; while the *latter* placed the whole of religion in external rites and bodily exercises. The methods also of solving the difficulties, and dissipating the doubts, that often arose in inquisitive minds, were of a piece with the rest of the superstitious system that now prevailed. The two great and irresistible arguments against all doubts, were *the authority of the church*, and the *working of miracles*; and the production of these prodigies required no extraordinary degree of dexterity in an age of such gross and universal ignorance.

II. Few either of the Greeks or Latins applied themselves to the interpretation of the holy Scriptures during this century. There are yet extant some commentaries of Isychius, bishop of Jerusalem, upon certain books of *the Old Testament*, and upon *the Epistle to the Hebrews*. Maximus published a solution of sixty-five *questions relating to the holy Scriptures*, and other productions of the same nature. Julian Pomerius attempted, but without success, to reconcile the seeming contradictions that are to be found in the sacred writings, and to explain the prophecy of Nahum. All these writers were manifestly inferior to the meanest expositors of modern times. The Grecian doctors, particularly those who pretended to be initiated in the most mysterious depths of theology, were continually hunting after fantastic allegories, as is evident from the *questions* of Maximus already mentioned. The Latins, on the contrary, were so diffident of their abilities, that they did not dare to enter these allegori-

The expositors of the holy Scriptures.

^x St. Eligius, or Eloi, expresses himself upon this matter in the following manner: "Bonus Christianus est, qui ad ecclesiam frequenter venit, et oblationem, quæ in altari Deo offeratur, exhibet: qui de fructibus suis non gustat, nisi prius Deo aliquid offerat; qui, quoties sanctæ solemnitates adveniunt, ante dies plures castitatem etiam cum propria uxore custodit, ut secunda conscientia Domini altare accedere possit; qui postremo symbolum vel orationem Dominicam memoriter tenet. Redimite animas vestras de pœna, dum habetis in potestate remedia; oblationes et decimas ecclesiis offerite, luminaria sanctis locis, juxta quod habetis, exhibite; ad ecclesiam quoque frequentius convenite, sanctorum patrocinia humiliter expetite; quod si observaveritis, securi in die judicii ante tribunal æterni judicis venientis dicetis; Da, Domine, quia dedimus." [¶ We see here a large and ample description of the character of a *good Christian*, in which there is not the least mention of the *love of God*, *resignation* to his will, *obedience* to his laws, or of *justice*, *benevolence*, and *charity* toward men; and in which the whole of religion is made to consist in *coming often to the church*, *bringing offerings to the altar*, *lighting candles in consecrated places*, and such like vain services.

cal labyrinths, but contented themselves with what flowers they could pluck out of the rich collections of Gregory and Augustin. Of this we see a manifest example in Paterius's *Exposition of the Old and New Testament*, which is entirely compiled from the writings of Gregory the Great.^y Among the interpreters of this century, we must not forget Thomas, bishop of Heraclea, who gave a second Syriac version of all the books of the New Testament.^z

III. While philosophy and theology had scarcely any remains of life, any marks of existence among the Latins, the Greeks were wholly occupied with Didactic theology. controversies about certain particular branches of religion, and never once thought of reducing all the doctrines of Christianity into one regular and rational system. It is true, Antiochus, a monk of Palestine, composed a short summary of the Christian doctrine, which he entitled *The Pandect of the holy Scriptures*. It is, however, easy to perceive what sort of an author he was, how void of dignity and true judgment, from many circumstances, and particularly from that rueful poem which is subjoined to his work, in which he deploras, in lamentable strains, the loss of that precious fragment of the true cross, which is said to have been carried away by the Persians among other spoils. The most elegant and judicious summary of theology that appeared among the Latins in this century, was the treatise of Ildefonse, *De cognitione baptismi*, which was saved by Balusius from the ruins of time; a work indeed which is not extremely necessary, since the ignoble frauds of superstition have been so fully brought to light, though it contains remarkable proofs that many of the corrupt additions and inventions, which disfigure Christianity in the popish churches, were not contrived till after this period.^a The dry and insipid body of divinity, composed by Taio, or Tago, bishop of Saragossa, under the title of *Five*

y This useless production has been usually published with the works of Gregory the Great: in consequence of which, the Benedictine monks have inserted it in their splendid edition of the works of that pontiff, tom. iv. part ii.

z Jos. Sim. Assemani *Biblioth. Orient. Vatican.* tom. ii. p. 93, 94.

a See Baluzii *Miscellanea.* tom. vi. p. 1. From the work of Ildefonsus it appears evident, that the monstrous doctrine of transubstantiation was absolutely unknown to the Latins in this century; see C. 137, p. 99; that the Holy Scriptures were in the hands of all Christians, and were perused by them without the least molestation or restraint, C. 80, p. 59. Ildefonsus, it is true, is zealous in banishing reason and philosophy from religious matters, he, however, establishes the *Holy Scriptures* and the *writings of the ancient doctors* as the supreme tribunals before which all theological opinions are to be tried, p. 14. 92.

Books of Sentences, and compiled from the writings of Gregory and Augustin, is scarcely worthy of mention, though in this century, it was considered as an admirable and immortal work.^b

Several particular branches of doctrine were treated by the theological writers of this age; thus Maximus wrote concerning the nature of *theology* and the *manifestation of the Son in the flesh*, and also concerning the *two natures in Christ*; and Theodore Raithu composed a treatise concerning Christ's *incarnation*. But a small acquaintance with the state of learning and religion at this period will enable us to form a just, though disadvantageous, idea of the merit of these performances, and also of their authors.

iv. The moral writers of this century, and their miserable productions, show too plainly to what a wretched state that noble and important science was now reduced. Among these moralists, the first rank is due to Dorotheus, author of the *Ascetic Dissertations*; Maximus, Aldhelm, Hesychius, Thalassius, and some others; yet even in their productions, what grovelling notions do we find! what rubbish, what a heap of superstitious fancies, and how many marks of extravagance, perplexity, and doubt! beside, the *laity* had little reason to complain of the severity of their moral directors, whose custom it was to reduce all the obligations of Christianity to the practice of a small number of virtues, as appears from Aldhelm's *Treatise concerning the eight principal virtues*. Nor was the neglect of these duties attended with such penalties as were proper to restrain offenders. The false notions also, which prevailed in this age, tended much to diminish a just sense of the nature and obligation of virtue; for the solitude of the monastic life, though accompanied with no marks of solid and genuine piety, was deemed sufficient to atone for all sorts of crimes, and was therefore honoured among the Latins with the title of the *second baptism*, which circumstance alone may serve to show us the miserable state of Christianity at this time. The greatest part of the Grecian and oriental monks laboured to arrive at a state of perfection by mere contemplation, and studiously endeavoured to form their temper and characters after the model of Dionysius, the chief of the mystics.

^b See Mabillon, *Analecta veteris avi*, tom. ii. p. 68.

v. Theodore of Tarsus, a Grecian monk, restored among the Latins the discipline of *penance*, as it is commonly termed, which had been for a long time almost totally neglected, and enforced it by a body of severe laws borrowed from the Grecian canons. This zealous prelate, being raised beyond his expectation to the see of Canterbury, A. D. 668, formed and executed several pious and laudable projects; and among other things reduced to a regular science that branch of ecclesiastical law which is known by the name of *penitential discipline*. He published a *penitential*, which was entirely new to the Latin world, by which the clergy were taught to distinguish sins into various classes, according as they were more or less heinous, private or public; to judge of them and determine the degrees of their guilt by their nature and consequences; the intention of the offender; the time and place in which they were committed; and the circumstances with which they were attended. This new *penitential* contained also the methods of proceeding with respect to offenders; pointed out the penalties that were suitable to the various classes of transgressions; prescribed the forms of *consolation*, *exhortation*, and *absolution*; and described, in an ample and accurate manner, the duties and obligations of those who were to receive the confessions of the penitent.^c This new discipline, though of Grecian origin, was eagerly adopted by the Latin churches; and, in a short space of time, passed from Britain into all the western provinces, where the book of Theodore became the model of all other *penitentials*, and was multiplied in a vast number of copies. The duration of this discipline was but transitory; for in the eighth century it began to decline, and was at length entirely supplanted by what was called the new canon of *indulgences*.

vi. The doctors who opposed the various sects are scarcely worthy of mention, and would deserve still less an attentive perusal, did not their writings contribute to illustrate the history of the times in which they lived. Nicias composed two books

The renewal
of penitential
discipline.

The state of
polemic theo-
logy.


^c The *penitential* of Theodore is yet extant, though maimed and imperfect, in an edition published at Paris in the year 1679, in 4to. by Petit; and enriched with learned dissertations and notes of the editor. We have also the cxx. *Capitula Ecclesiast.* Theodori, published in Dacærius's *Spicilegium*, tom. ix. and in the *Concilia Harduini*, tom. iii. p. 1771.


against the Gentiles ; and Photius informs us that a certain writer, whose name is unknown, embarked in the same controversy, and supported the good cause by a prodigious number of arguments, drawn from ancient records and monuments.^d Julius Pomerius exerted his polemic talent against the Jews. The views of Timotheus were yet more extensive ; for he gave an ample description and a laboured confutation of all the various *heresies* that divided the church, in his book *concerning the reception of heretics*.

As to the dissensions of the catholic Christians among themselves, they produced, at this time, few or no events worthy of mention. We shall therefore only observe, that in this century were sown the seeds of those fatal discords, which rent asunder the bonds of Christian communion between the Greek and Latin churches ; nay, these seeds had already taken root in the minds of the Greeks, to whom the Roman power became insupportable, and the pretensions of the sovereign pontiffs odious.

In Britain, warm controversies concerning baptism, the tonsure, and particularly the famous dispute concerning the time of celebrating the Easter festival, were carried on between the ancient Britons, and the new converts to Christianity, which Augustin had made among the Anglo-Saxons.^e The fundamental doctrines of Christianity were not at all affected by these controversies, which, on that account were more innocent and less important than they would have otherwise been. Beside, they were entirely terminated in the eighth century in favour of the Anglo-Saxons, by the Benedictine monks.^f

^d *Biblioth. Cod.* clxx. p. 379.

^e Cummani *Epistola* in Jac. Usserii *Sylloge Epistolar. Hibernicar.* p. 23. Bedæ *Historia Ecclesiast. gentis Anglor.* lib. iii. cap. xxv. Wilkins's *Concilia Magnæ Britanni.* tom. i. p. 37, 42. *Acta Sanctor. Februar.* tom. iii. p. 21, 84.  See also Dr. Warner's *Ecclesiastical History of England*, books ii. and iii. This history, which has lately appeared, deserves the highest applause, on account of that noble spirit of liberty, candour, and moderation, that seems to have guided the pen of the judicious author. It were at the same time to be wished, that this elegant historian had less avoided citing authorities, and had been a little more lavish of that erudition which he is known to possess ; for then, after having surpassed Collier in all other respects, he would have equalled him in that depth and learning, which are the only meritorious circumstances of his partial and disagreeable history.

^f Mabillon, *Præf. ad Sæc. iii. Benedictinum*, p. 2.  See also Dr. Warner's *Ecclesiast. Hist.* book iii.

CHAPTER IV.

CONCERNING THE RITES AND CEREMONIES USED IN THE CHURCH DURING
THIS CENTURY.

I. In the council of Constantinople, which was called Quinisextum,^g the Greeks enacted several laws concerning the ceremonies that were to be observed in divine worship, which rendered their ritual, in some respects, different from that of the Romans. These laws were publicly received by all the churches which were established in the dominions of the Grecian emperors; and also by those which were joined with them in communion and doctrine, though under the civil jurisdiction of barbarian princes. Nor was this all; for every Roman pontiff added something new to the ancient rites and institutions, as if it was an essential mark of their zeal for religion, and of their pious discharge of the ministerial function, to divert the multitude with new shows and new spectacles of devout mummary. These superstitious inventions were, in the time of Charlemagne, propagated from Rome among the other Latin churches, whose subjection to the Roman ritual was necessary to satisfy the ambitious demands of the lordly pontiff.

II. It will not be improper to select here a few out of the many instances we could produce of the multiplication of religious rites in this century. The number of festivals, under which the church already groaned, was now augmented; a new festival was instituted in honour of the true cross on which Christ suffered, and another in commemoration of the Saviour's ascension into heaven. Boniface V. enacted that infamous law, by which the churches became places of refuge to all who fled thither for protection; a law which procured a sort of impunity to the most enormous crimes, and gave a loose rein to the licentiousness of the most abandoned profligates. Honorius employed all his diligence and zeal in embellishing churches, and other consecrated places, with the most pompous and magnificent ornaments; for as nei-

Religious rites multiplied.

Some examples of this addition to the ritual.

^g This council was called Quinisextum, from its being considered as a supplement to the fifth and sixth councils of Constantinople, in which nothing had been decreed concerning the morals of Christians, or religious ceremonies.

ther Christ nor his apostles had left any injunctions of this nature to their followers, their pretended vicar thought it but just to supply this defect by the most splendid display of his ostentatious beneficence. We shall pass in silence the riches and variety of the sacerdotal garments that were now used at the celebration of the eucharist, and in the performance of divine worship, as this would lead us into a tedious detail of minute and unimportant matters.

CHAPTER V.

CONCERNING THE DIVISIONS AND HERESIES THAT TROUBLED THE CHURCH DURING THIS CENTURY.

I. THE Greeks, were engaged, during this century, in the most bitter and virulent controversy with the Paulicians, whom they considered as a branch of the Manichean sect, and who were settled in Armenia and the adjacent countries. This dispute was carried to the greatest height under the reigns of Constans, Constantine Pogonatus, and Justinian II. and the Greeks were not only armed with arguments, but were also seconded by the force of military legions, and the terror of penal laws. A certain person, whose name was Constantine, revived, under the reign of Constans, the drooping faction of the Paulicians, which was now ready to expire; and propagated with great success its pestilential^b doctrines. But this is not the place to enlarge upon the tenets and history of this sect, whose origin is attributed to Paul and John, two brothers, who revived and modified the doctrine of Manes. As it was in the ninth century that the Paulicians flourished most, and acquired strength sufficient to support the rigours of an open and cruel war with the Greeks, we shall reserve a more particular account of them for our history of that period.

The remains
of the ancient
sects.

II. In Italy, the Lombards preferred the opinions of the Arians to the doctrine which was established by the council of Nice. In Gaul and in England, the Pelagian and Semipelagian controversies con-

Arians.

Pelagians.

^b Photius, lib. i. *Contra Manich.* p. 61. Petri Siculi *Historia Manich.* p. 41. Georg. Cedrenus, *Compend. Hist.* p. 431, edit. Venet.

tinued to excite the warmest animosities and dissensions. In the eastern provinces, the ancient sects, which had been weakened and oppressed by the imperial laws, but neither totally extirpated nor destroyed, began, in many places, to raise their heads, to recover their vigour, and to gain proselytes. The terror of penal laws had obliged them, for some time, to seek their safety in their obscurity, and therefore to conceal their opinions from the public eye; but as soon as they saw the fury or the power of their adversaries diminish, their hopes returned, and their courage was renewed.

III. The condition both of the Nestorians and Monophysites was much more flourishing under the Saracens, who were now become lords of the east, Nestorians
and Monophysites. than it had been hitherto under the Christian emperors, or even the Persian monarchs. These two sects met with a distinguished protection from their new masters, while the Greeks suffered under the same sceptre all the rigours of persecution and banishment. Jesuiabas, the sovereign pontiff of the Nestorians, concluded a treaty, first with Mahomet, and afterward with Omar, by which he obtained many signal advantages for his sect.ⁱ There is yet extant a Testamentary Diploma of Mahomet, in which he promises and bequeaths to the Christians, in his dominions, the quiet and undisturbed enjoyment of their religion, together with their temporal advantages and possessions. Some learned men have indeed called in question the authenticity of this deed; it is however certain, that the Mahometans unanimously acknowledge it to be genuine.^k Accordingly, the successors of Mahomet in

ⁱ Jos. Simon. *Assemani Biblioth. Orient. Vatican.* tom. iii. pars ii. p. 94.


^k This famous *Testament* of Mahomet was brought from the east, during the last century, by Pacificus Scaliger, a Capuchin monk, and was published first in Arabic and Latin at Paris by Gabriel Sionita, A.D. 1630; afterward in Latin by the learned Fabricius, A.D. 1638; and also by Hinckelman, A. D. 1690. See Henr. Hottinger. *Hist. Orient.* lib. ii. cap. xv. p. 237. *Assemani Bibl. Orient. Vat.* tom. iii. pars ii. p. 95. Renaudot, *Hist. Patriarchar. Alexandr.* p. 168. They who, in conformity with the opinion of Grotius, reject this Testament, suppose it forged by the Syrian and Arabian monks, with a view to soften the Mahometan yoke under which they groaned, and to render their despotic masters less severe. Nor is this representation of the matter at all incredible; for it is certain, that the monks of mount Sinai formerly showed an edict of Mahomet of the same nature with the one now under consideration, which they pretend was drawn up by him while he was yet in a private station. This edict was extremely advantageous to them, and was undoubtedly an artful piece of forgery. The fraud was plain; but the Mahometans, in consequence of their ignorance and stupidity, believed it to be a genuine production of their chief, and continue still in the same opinion. There is an account of this fraud given by Cantimer, in his *Histoire de l'Empire Ottoman*, tom. ii. p. 269. The argument therefore which Renaudot and others draw in favour of the *Testament* in ques-

Persia, employed the Nestorians in the most important affairs, both of the cabinet and of the provinces, and suffered the patriarch of that sect only to reside in the kingdom of Babylon.¹ The Monophysites enjoyed in Syria and Egypt an equal degree of favour and protection. Amrus, having made himself master of Alexandria, in the year 644, fixed Benjamin, the pontiff of the Monophysites, in the episcopal residence of that noble city; and from this period, the Melchites^m were without a bishop for almost a whole century."

iv. Though the Greek church was already torn asunder by the most lamentable divisions, yet its calamities were far from being at an end. A new sect arose, A. D. 630, under the reign of the emperor Heraclius, which in a short space of time excited such violent commotions as engaged the eastern and western churches to unite their forces in order to its extinction. The source of this tumult was an unseasonable plan of peace and union. Heraclius, considering with pain the detriment which the Grecian empire had suffered by the migration of the persecuted Nestorians, and their settlement in Persia, was ardently desirous of reuniting the Monophysites to the bosom of the Greek church, lest the empire should receive a new wound by their departure from it. Pursuant to this idea, he held a conference during the Persian war, A. D. 622, with a certain person named Paul, a man of great credit and authority among the Armenian Monophysites; and another at Hierapolis, in the year 629, with Athanasius the catholic or bishop of that sect, upon the methods that seemed most proper to restore tranquillity

tion, from the acknowledgment which the Mahometans make of its authenticity, is of little or no weight; since the Mahometans of all others are the most liable to be deceived in things of this nature, by their gross and unparalleled ignorance. On the other hand, several of the arguments used by those, who deny the authenticity of this *Testament*, are equally unsatisfactory; that, particularly, which is drawn from the difference that there is between the style of this deed and that of the *Alcoran*, proves absolutely nothing at all; since it is not essential to the genuineness of this *Testament* to suppose it penned by Mahomet himself, because the impostor might have employed a secretary to compose it. But let this *Testament* be genuine or spurious, it is undeniably certain that its contents were true; since many learned men have fully proved, that Mahomet, at his first setting out, prohibited, in the strongest manner, the commission of all sorts of injuries against the Christians, and especially the Nestorians.

1 Assemanni, l. c. p. 97. Eusebe Renaud. *Hist. Patriarch. Alexandr.* p. 163, 169.

 m The *Melchites* were those Christians in Syria, Egypt, and the Levant, who, though not Greeks, followed the doctrines and ceremonies of the Greek church. They were called Melchites, i. e. Royalists, by their adversaries, by way of reproach, on account of their implicit submission to the edict of the emperor Marcian, in favour of the council of Chalcedon.

n Euseb. Renaud. *Hist. Patriarch. Alexandr.* p. 168.

and concord to a divided church. Both these persons assured the emperor, that they who maintained the doctrine of *one nature*, might be induced to receive the decrees of the council of Chalcedon, and thereby to terminate their controversy with the Greeks, provided that the latter would give their assent to the truth of the following proposition, viz. *that in Jesus Christ there was, after the union of the two natures, but one will, and one operation*. Heraclius communicated this matter to Sergius, patriarch of Constantinople, who was a Syrian by birth, and whose parents adhered to the doctrine of the Monophysites. This prelate gave it as his opinion that the doctrine of *one will* and *one operation*, after the *union* of the *two natures*, might be safely adopted without the least injury to truth, or the smallest detriment to the authority of the council of Chalcedon. In consequence of this, the emperor published an edict, A. D. 630, in favour of that doctrine, and hoped, by this act of authority, to restore peace and concord both in church and state.^o

v. The first reception of this new project was promising, and things seemed to go on smoothly. For though some ecclesiastics refused submitting to the imperial edict, yet Cyrus and Athanasius, the patriarchs of Alexandria and Antioch, received it without hesitation; and the see of Jerusalem was at that time vacant.^p As to the Roman pontiff, he was entirely overlooked in the matter, as his consent was not considered as at all necessary in an affair that related only to the eastern church. In the meantime Cyrus, who had been promoted by Heraclius from the see of Phasis to that of Alexandria, assembled a council, by the seventh decree of which the doctrine of Monothelitism, or *one will*, which the emperor had introduced by the edict already mentioned, was solemnly confirmed. This new modification of the doctrine of the council of Chalcedon, which seemed to bring it nearer to the Eutychian system, had the desired effect upon the Monothelites, and induced great numbers of them, who were dispersed in Egypt, Armenia, and other remote provinces, to return into the bosom of the church. They however explained the perplexed and ambiguous doctrine of *one will* in Christ, in a manner peculiar to

The progress
of their doc-
trine.

^o The authors who have written concerning this sect are mentioned by Jo. Alb. Fabricius, in his *Biblioth. Græc.* vol. x. p. 204. The account which I have here given of them is drawn from the fountain head, and is supported by the best authorities.

^p See Le Quien, *Oriens Christianus*, tom. iii. p. 264.

themselves, and not quite conformable to the true principles of their sect.

VI. This smiling prospect of peace and concord was however but transitory, and was unhappily succeeded by the most dreadful tumults, excited by a monk of Palestine, whose name was Sophronius. This monk being present at the council assembled at Alexandria by Cyrus, in the year 633, had violently opposed the decree which confirmed the doctrine of *one will* in Christ. His opposition, which was then treated with contempt, became more formidable the following year; when, raised to the patriarchal see of Jerusalem, he summoned a council, in which the Monothelites were condemned as heretics, who revived and propagated the Eutychian errors, concerning the mixture and confusion of the two natures in Christ. Multitudes, alarmed at the cry of heresy raised by this seditious monk, adopted his sentiments; but it was Honorius, the Roman pontiff, that he laboured principally to gain over to his side. His efforts, however, were vain; for Sergius, the patriarch of Constantinople, having informed Honorius, by a long and artful letter, of the true state of the question, determined that pontiff in favour of the doctrine which maintained *one will* and *one operation* in Christ.^q Hence arose those obstinate contests which rent the church into two sects, and the state into two factions.

VII. In order to put an end to these commotions, Heraclius issued out, in the year 639, the famous edict composed by Sergius, and called the *ecthesis*, or exposition of the faith, in which all controversies upon the question, *whether in Christ there was one or two operations*, were strictly prohibited, though in the same edict the doctrine of *one will* was plainly inculcated. A considerable number of the eastern bishops declared their assent to this new law, which was also submissively received by

The opposition it met with.

The contests occasioned by the *ecthesis* and the type.

^q The Roman Catholic writers have employed all their art and industry to represent the conduct of Honorius in such a manner, as to save his pretended infallibility from the charge of error in a question of such importance. See among others, Harduin, *De sacramento altaris*, which is published in his *Opera Selecta*, p. 255. And indeed it is easy to find both matter of accusation and defence in the case of this pontiff. On the one hand it would appear that he himself knew not his own sentiments, nor attached any precise and definitive meaning to the expressions he used in the course of this controversy. On the other hand it is certain that he gave it as his opinion, that in Christ there was but *one will* and *one operation*. It was for this that he was condemned in the council of Constantinople, and he must of consequence be undoubtedly a heretic, if it is true that general councils cannot err. See Bossuet, in his *Defence of the Declaration made by the Gallican Clergy, in the year 1682, concerning Ecclesiastical power*, pars ii. lib. xii. cap. xvi. p. 182. See also Basnage, *Histoire de l'Eglise*, tom. i. p. 321.

their chief, Pyrrhus, who, upon the death of Sergius in the year 639, was raised to the see of Constantinople. In the west the case was quite different. John, the fourth Roman pontiff of that name, assembled a council at Rome, A. D. 639, in which the *ecthesis* was rejected, and the Monothelites condemned. Nor was this all; for in the progress of this contest a new edict, known by the name of *type* or *formula*, was published in the year 648, by the emperor Constans, by the advice of Paul of Constantinople, by which the *ecthesis* was suppressed, and the contending parties commanded to terminate their disputes concerning the *one will* and the *one operation* in Christ, by observing a profound silence upon that difficult and ambiguous subject. This silence, which was so wisely commanded in a matter which it was impossible to determine to the satisfaction of the contending parties, appeared highly criminal to the angry and contentious monks. They therefore excited Martin, bishop of Rome, to oppose his authority to an edict which hindered them from propagating strife and contention in the church; and their importunities had the desired effect; for this prelate, in a council of a hundred and five bishops, assembled at Rome, A. D. 649, condemned both the *ecthesis* and the *type*, though without any mention of the names of the emperors who had published those edicts, and thundered out the most dreadful anathemas against the Monothelites and their patrons, who were solemnly consigned to the devil and his angels.

VIII. The emperor Constans, justly irritated at these haughty and impudent proceedings of Martin, who treated the imperial laws with such contempt, ordered him to be seized and carried into the isle of Naxos, where he was kept prisoner a whole year. This order, which was followed with much cruel treatment, was executed by Calliopas, exarch of Italy, in the year 650; and at the same time, Maximus, the ringleader of the seditious monks, was banished to Bizyca; and other rioters of the same tribe were differently punished in proportion to the part they acted in this rebellion. These resolute proceedings rendered Eugenius and Vitalianus, the succeeding bishops of Rome, more moderate and prudent than

The sixth general council.

It is proper to observe here, that Paul, who was a Monothelite in his heart, and had maintained the *ecthesis* with great zeal, fell upon this prudent measure with a view to appease the Roman pontiff and the African bishops, who were incensed against him to the highest degree, on account of his attachment to the doctrine of *one will*.

their predecessor had been ; especially the latter, who received Constans, upon his arrival at Rome in the year 663, with the highest marks of distinction and respect, and used the wisest precautions to prevent the flame of that unhappy controversy from breaking out a second time. And thus, for several years, it appeared to be extinguished ; but it was so only in appearance ; it was a lurking flame, which spread itself secretly, and gave reason to those who examined things with attention, to dread new combustions both in church and state. To prevent these, Constantine Pogonatus, the son of Constans, pursuant to the advice of Agatho, the Roman pontiff, summoned, in the year 680, the sixth *general or œcumenical council*, in which he permitted the Monothelites and pope Honorius himself to be solemnly condemned in presence of the Roman legates, who represented Agatho in that assembly, and confirmed the sentence pronounced by the council, by the sanction of penal laws enacted against such as pretended to oppose it.

IX. It is difficult to give a clear and accurate account of the sentiments of those who were called Monothelites ; nor is it easy to point out the objections of their adversaries. Neither of the contending parties express themselves consistently with what seem to have been their respective opinions ; and they both disavow the errors with which they reciprocally charge each other. The following observations contain the clearest notion we can form of the state of this subtile controversy. 1. The Monothelites declared that they had no connexion with the Eutychians and Monophysites ; but maintained, in opposition to these two sects, that in Christ there were two distinct natures, which were so united, though without the least mixture or confusion, as to form by their union only one person. 2. They acknowledged that the soul of Christ was endowed with a will or faculty of volition, which it still retained after its union with the divine nature. For they taught that Christ was not only perfect God, but also perfect man ; from whence it followed, that his soul was endowed with the faculty of volition. 3. They denied that this faculty of volition in the soul of Christ was absolutely inactive, maintaining, on the contrary, that it co-operated with the divine will. 4. They therefore in effect attributed to our Lord two wills, and these moreover, operating and active. 5. They however affirmed.

A short view
of the doctrine
of the Mono-
thelites.

that in a certain sense, there was in Christ but one will and one manner of operation.

x. We must not indeed imagine that all who were distinguished by the title of Monothelites, were unanimous in their sentiments with respect to the points now mentioned. Some, as appears from undoubted testimonies, meant no more than this, that the two wills in Christ were *one*, i. e. in perfect harmony ; that the human will was in perpetual conformity with the divine, and was, consequently, always holy, just, and good ; in which opinion there is nothing reprehensible. Others, approaching nearer to the sentiments of the Monophysites, imagined that the two wills or faculties of volition in Christ were blended into one, in that which they called the *personal union* ; acknowledging, at the same time, that the distinction between these two wills was perceivable by reason, and that it was also necessary to distinguish carefully in this matter. The greatest part of this sect, and those who were also the most remarkable for their subtilty and penetration, were of opinion that the human will of Christ was the instrument of the divine ; or in other words, never operated or acted of itself, but was always ruled, influenced, and impelled by the divine will, in such a manner, however, that when it was once set in motion, it decreed and operated with the ruling principle. The doctrine of one will and one operation in Christ, which the Monothelites maintained with such invincible obstinacy, was a natural consequence of this hypothesis ; since the operation of an instrument and of the being who employs it, is one simple operation, and not two distinct operations or energies. According to this view of things, the Eutychian doctrine was quite out of the question ; and the only point of controversy to be determined was, whether the human will in Christ was a self-moving faculty determined by its own internal impulse ; or whether, on the contrary, it derived all its motions and operations from the divine ?

Different opinions among that sect.

In the mean time, we may learn from this controversy, that nothing is more precarious and nothing more dangerous and deceitful, than that religious peace and concord which are founded upon ambiguous doctrines, and cemented by obscure and equivocal propositions, or articles of faith. The partisans of the council of Chalcedon endeavoured to ensnare the Monophysites, by proposing their

doctrine in a manner that admitted of a double explication; and by this imprudent piece of cunning, that showed so little reverence for the truth, they involved both church and state in tedious and lamentable divisions.

xi. The doctrine of the Monothelites, condemned and exploded by the council of Constantinople, found a place of refuge among the Mardaites, a people who inhabited the mounts Libanus and Antilibanus, and who, about the conclusion of this century, were called Maronites, after Maro, their first bishop, a name which they still retain. None of the ancient writers give any certain account of the first person who instructed these mountaineers in the doctrine of the Monothelites; it is probable, however, from several circumstances, that it was John Maro, whose name they had adopted.^s One thing indeed we know, with the utmost certainty, from the testimony of Tyrius and other unexceptionable witnesses, as also from the most authentic records, and that is, that the Maronites retained the opinions of the Monothelites until the twelfth century, when abandoning and renouncing the doctrine of *one will* in Christ, they were readmitted, in the year 1182, to the communion of the Roman church. The most learned of the modern Maronites have left no method unemployed to defend their church against this accusation; they have laboured to prove, by a variety of testimonies, that their ancestors always persevered in the catholic faith, in their attachment to the Roman pontiff, without ever adopting the doctrine either of the Monophysites or Monothelites. But all their efforts are insufficient to prove the truth of these assertions to such as have any acquaintance with the history of the church and the records of ancient times; for to all such the testimonies they allege will appear absolutely fictitious and destitute of authority.^t

^s This ecclesiastic received the name of Maro, from his having lived in the character of a monk in the famous convent of St. Maro, upon the borders of the Orentes, before his settlement among the Mardaites of mount Libanus. For an ample account of this prelate see Jos. Simon Assemani *Bibliothec. Orient. Clement. Vatic.* tom. i. p. 496.

^t The cause of the Maronites has been pleaded by the writers of that nation, such as Abraham Echellensis, Gabriel Sionita, and others; but the most ample defence of their uninterrupted orthodoxy was made by Faustus Nairon, partly in his *Dissertatio de origine, nomine ac religione Maronitarum*, published at Rome, A. D. 1679, and partly in his *Euoplia fidei Cathoicæ ex Syrorum et Chaldeorum Monumentis*, published in the same city, A. D. 1624. None of the learned, however, were persuaded by his arguments except Pagi* and La Roque, of whom the latter has given us, in his *Voyage de Syrie et de Montliban*. tom. ii. p. 28—123, a long dissertation concerning the origin of the Maronites. Even the learned Assemanus, himself a Maronite, and who has spared no pains to defend his na-

* See *Critica Baroniana ad A.* 694.

XII. Neither the sixth general council, in which the Monothelites were condemned, nor the fifth, which had been assembled in the preceding century, had determined any thing concerning ecclesiastical discipline or religious ceremonies. To supply this defect, a new assembly of bishops was held pursuant to the order of Justinian II. in a spacious hall of the imperial palace called *trullus*, i. e. *cupola*, from the form of the building. This council, which met A. D. 692, was called *quini-sexturn*, as we had occasion to observe formerly, from its being considered by the Greeks as a supplement to the fifth and sixth œcumenical councils, and as having given to the acts of these assemblies the degree of perfection which they had hitherto wanted. There are yet extant a hundred and two laws which were enacted in this council, and which related to the external celebration of divine worship, the government of the church, and the lives and manners of Christians. Of these there are six, which are diametrically opposite to several opinions and rites of the Romish church; for which reason the Roman pontiffs have refused to adopt, without restriction, the decisions of this council, or to reckon it in the number of those called *œcumenical*, though they look upon the greatest part of its decrees as worthy of applause.^a

The council
called *quini-*
sexturn.

tion* against the reproach in question, acknowledges ingenuously, that among the arguments used by Nairon and others in favour of the Maronites, there are a great many destitute of force. See Jo. Morinus, *De ordinat. Sacris*, p. 380. Rich. Simon, *Histoire Critique des Cretiens Orientaux*, chap. xiii. p. 146. Euseb. Renaudot. *Historia Patriarchar. Alexandrinor.* p. 149, and *Præf. ad Liturgias Orientales*. Le Brun, *Explication de la Messe*, tom. ii. p. 626, Paris, 1726. The arguments of the contending parties are enumerated impartially, in such a manner as leaves the decision to the reader, by Le Quien, in his *Oriens Christianus*, tom. iii. p. 10.

u See Franc. Pagi *Breviar. Pontif. Roman.* tom. i. p. 486. Christ. Lupus, *Dissertat. de Concilio Trulliano*, in *Notis et Dissertat. ad Concilia*, tom. iii. opp. p. 168. The Roman catholics reject the following decisions of this council. 1. The fifth *canon*, which approves of the eighty-five apostolical canons commonly attributed to Clement. 2. The thirteenth *canon*, which allows the priests to marry. 3. The fifty-fifth *canon*, which condemns the sabbath fast, that was an institution of the Latin church. 4. The sixty-seventh *canon*, which prescribes the most rigorous abstinence from blood and things strangled. 5. The eighty-second *canon*, which prohibits the representing Christ under the image of a lamb. 6. The thirty-sixth *canon*, concerning the equal rank and authority of the bishops of Rome and Constantinople.

* See *Biblioth. Oriental. Vatican.* tom. i. p. 496.



AN
ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY.

BOOK THE THIRD.

CONTAINING
THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH,
FROM CHARLEMAGNE
TO THE
REFORMATION BY LUTHER.



THE EIGHTH CENTURY.

PART I.


EXTERNAL HISTORY OF THE CHURCH.

CHAPTER I.

CONCERNING THE PROSPEROUS EVENTS WHICH HAPPENED TO THE CHURCH DURING THIS CENTURY.

I. WHILE the Mahometans were infesting with their arms, and adding to their conquests, the most flourishing provinces of Asia, and obscuring, as far as their influence could extend, the lustre and glory of the rising church, the Nestorians of Chaldea were carrying the lamp of Christianity among those barbarous nations, called Scythians by the ancients, and by the moderns, Tartars, who, independent of the Saracen yoke, had fixed their habitations within the limits of mount Imaus.^a It is now well known, that Timotheus, the Nestorian pontiff, who had been raised to that dignity A. D. 778, converted to the Christian faith, by the ministry of Subchal Jesu, whom he had consecrated bishop, first the Gelæ and Dailamites, by whom a part of Hyrcania was inhabited; and afterward, by the labours of other missionaries, the rest of the nations who had formed settlements in Hyrcania, Bactria, Margiana, and Sogdia.^b It is also certain, that Christianity enjoyed in these vast regions, notwithstanding the violent attacks of the Mahometans to which it was sometimes exposed, the advantages of a firm and solid establishment for a long course of ages; while the bishops, by whose minis-

The gospel propagated in Hyrcania and Tartary.

 ^a The southern regions of Scythia, were divided by the ancients, to whom the northern were unknown, into three parts, namely, Scythia within, and Scythia beyond Amrus, and Sarmatia. It is of the first of these three that Dr. Mosheim speaks as enlightened at this time with the knowledge of the gospel; and it comprehended Turkestan and Mongal, the Usbek, or Zagata, Kalmuc, and Nogaian Tartary, which were peopled by the Bactrians, Sogdians, Gandari, Sacs, and Massagetes, not to mention the land of Siberia, Samoiedes, and Nova Zembla, which were uninhabited in ancient times.

^b Thomas Margensis, *Historiæ Monasticæ*, lib. iii. in Jos. Sim. Assemani *Biblioth. Orient. Vatic.* tom. iii. pars i. p. 491. See also this latter work, tom. iii. pars ii. cap. ix. § 5. p. 478.

try it was propagated and supported, were all consecrated by the sole authority of the Nestorian pontiff.

II. If we turn our eyes toward Europe, we find many nations that were as yet unenlightend with the knowledge of the gospel. Almost all the Germans, if we except the Bavarians, who had embraced Christianity under Theodoric, or Thierry, the son of Clovis, and the eastern Franks, with a few other provinces, lay buried in the grossest darkness of pagan superstition. Many attempts were made, by pious and holy men, to infuse the truth into the minds of these savage Germans; and various efforts were used for the same purpose by kings and princes, whose interest it was to propagate a religion that was so adapted to mitigate and tame the ferocity of these warlike nations; but neither the attempts of pious zeal, nor the efforts of policy, were attended with success. This great work was however effected in this century, by the ministry of Winfrid, a benedictine monk, born in England of illustrious parents, and afterward known by the name of Boniface. This famous ecclesiastic, attended by two companions of his pious labours, passed over into Friesland, A. D. 715, to preach the gospel to the people of that country, but this first attempt was unsuccessful; and a war breaking out between Radbod, the king of that country, and Charles Martel, our zealous missionary returned to England. He resumed however his pious undertaking in the year 719; and being solemnly empowered by the Roman pontiff, Gregory II. to preach the gospel not only in Friesland, but all over Germany, he performed the functions of a Christian teacher among the Thuringians, Frieslanders, and Hessians, with considerable success.^c

III. This eminent missionary was, in the year 723, consecrated bishop by Gregory II. who changed the name of Winfrid into that of Boniface; seconded also by the powerful protection, and encouraged by the liberality of Charles Martel, mayor of the palace to Chilperic, king of France, he resumed his ministerial labours among the Hessians and Thuringians, and finished with glory the task he had undertaken,

Other pious exploits of this famous missionary, and his advancement in the church.

^c An ample account of this eminent man is to be found in a learned dissertation of Gudenius, *De S. Bonifacio Germanorum Apostolo*, published in 4to. at Helmstadt in the year 1722. See also Jo. Alb. Fabricii *Biblioth. Latina mediæ ævi*, tom. i. p. 709. *Hist. Liter. de la France*, tom. iv. p. 92. Mabillon, in *Annalibus Benedictinis*, &c.

in which he received considerable assistance from a number of pious and learned men, who repaired to him from England and France. As the Christian churches erected by Boniface were too numerous to be governed by one bishop, this prelate was advanced to the dignity of archbishop, in the year 738, by Gregory III. by whose authority, and the auspicious protection of Carloman and Pepin, the sons of Charles Martel, he founded, in Germany, the bishoprics of Wurtzbourg, Burabourg, Erfurt, and Aichstadt; to which he added, in the year 744, the famous monastery of Fulda. His last promotion, and the last recompense of his assiduous labours in the propagation of the truth, was his advancement to the archiepiscopal see of Mentz, A. D. 746, by Zachary, bishop of Rome, by whom he was, at the same time, created primate of Germany and Belgium. In his old age, he returned again to Friesland, that he might finish his ministry in the same place where he had entered first upon its functions; but his piety was ill rewarded by that barbarous people, by whom he was murdered in the year 755, while fifty ecclesiastics, who accompanied him in this voyage, shared the same unhappy fate.

iv. Boniface, on account of his ministerial labours and holy exploits, was distinguished by the honourable title of the *Apostle of the Germans*; nor, if we consider impartially the eminent services he rendered to Christianity, will this title appear to have been undeservedly bestowed. But it is necessary to observe, that this eminent prelate was an apostle of modern fashion, and had, in many respects, departed from the excellent model exhibited in the conduct and ministry of the primitive and true apostles. Beside his zeal for the glory and authority of the Roman pontiff, which equalled, if it did not surpass, his zeal for the service of Christ, and the propagation of his religion,^d many other things unworthy of a truly Christian minister are laid to his charge. In combating the pagan superstitions, he did not always use those arms, with which the ancient heralds of the gospel gained such victories in behalf of the truth; but often employed violence and terror, and sometimes artifice and fraud, in

The judgment we are to form concerning the apostleship of Boniface.

^d The French Benedictine monks ingenuously confess that Boniface was an over zealous partisan of the Roman pontiff, and attributed more authority to him than was just and fitting. Their words, in their *Histoire Littéraire de la France*, tom. iv. p. 106, are as follows; "Il exprime son devouement pour le S. Siege en des termes qui ne sont pas assez proportionés a la dignité du caractère episcopal."

order to multiply the number of Christians. His *Epistles*, moreover, discover an imperious and arrogant temper ; a cunning and insidious turn of mind ; an excessive zeal for increasing the honours and pretensions of the sacerdotal order ; and a profound ignorance of many things of which the knowledge was absolutely necessary in an apostle, and particularly of the true nature and genius of the Christian religion.

v. The famous prelate, of whom we have been now speaking, was not the only Christian minister who attempted to deliver the German nations from the miserable bondage of pagan superstition ; several others signalized their zeal in the same laudable and pious undertaking. Corbinian, a French Benedictine monk, after having laboured with vast assiduity and fervour in planting the gospel among the Bavarians, and other countries, became bishop of Friesingen.^e Firmin, a Gaul by birth, preached the gospel under various kinds of suffering and opposition in Alsatia, Bavaria, and Helvetia, now Switzerland, and had inspection over a considerable number of monasteries.^f Lebuin, an Englishman, laboured with the most ardent zeal and assiduity to engage the fierce and warlike Saxons, and also the Frieslanders, Belgæ, and other nations, to receive the light of Christianity ; but his ministry was attended with very little fruit.^g We pass over in silence several apostles of less fame ; nor is it necessary to mention Willibrord, and others of superior reputation, who persisted now with great alacrity and constancy in the labours they had undertaken in the preceding century, in order to the propagation of divine truth.

vi. A war broke out at this time, between Charlemagne and the Saxons, which contributed much to the propagation of Christianity, though not by the force of rational persuasion. The Saxons were at this time a numerous and formidable people, who inhabited a considerable part of Germany, and were engaged in perpetual quarrels with the Franks concerning their boundaries and other matters of complaint. Hence Charlemagne

The expedition of Charlemagne against the Saxons.

^e Baronius, *Annal. Eccles.* tom. viii. ad. An. dccxvi. § 10. Car. Maichelbeck, *Historia Frisingensis*, tom. i.

^f Herm. Bruschii *Chronologia Monaster. German.* p. 30. Anton. Pagi *Critica in Annales Baronii*, tom. ii. ad An. deelix. § 9. *Histoire Littéraire de la France*, tom. iv. p. 124.

^g Hucbaldi *Vita S. Lebuini* in Laur. Suri *Vitis Sanctor.* d. 12. Nov. p. 277. Jo. Mol *Scii Cimbria Literata*, tom. ii. p. 464.

turned his arms against this powerful nation, A. D. 772, with a design, not only to subdue that spirit of revolt with which they had so often troubled the empire, but also to abolish their idolatrous worship, and engage them to embrace the Christian religion. He hoped, by their conversion, to vanquish their obstinacy, imagining that the divine precepts of the gospel would assuage their impetuous and restless passions, mitigate their ferocity, and induce them to submit more tamely to the government of the Franks. These projects were great in idea, but difficult in execution; accordingly, the first attempt to convert the Saxons, after having subdued them, was unsuccessful, because it was made without the aid of violence or threats by the bishops and monks whom the victor had left among that conquered people, whose obstinate attachment to idolatry no arguments nor exhortations could overcome. More forcible means were afterward used to draw them into the pale of the church, in the wars which Charlemagne carried on, in the years 775, 776, and 780, against that valiant people, whose love of liberty was excessive, and whose aversion to the restraints of sacerdotal authority was inexpressible.^a During these wars, their attachment to the superstition of their ancestors was so warmly combated by the allurements of reward, by the terror of punishment, and by the imperious language of victory, that they suffered themselves to be baptized, though with inward reluctance, by the missionaries which the emperor sent among them for that purpose.ⁱ

^h It will be proper here to transcribe, from the epistles of the famous Alcuin, once abbot of Canterbury, a remarkable passage, which will show us the reasons which contributed principally to give the Saxons an aversion to Christianity, and at the same time expose the absurd and preposterous manner of teaching used by the missionaries, who were sent to convert them. This passage, in the sixth *epistle*, and in the 1647th page of his works, is as follows; “Si tanta instantia leve Christi jugum et onus ejus leve durissimo Saxonum populo prædicaretur, quanta Decimarum redditu vel legalis pro parvissimis quibuslibet culpis edictis necessitas exigebatur, forte baptismatis sacramenta non abhorrerent. Sint tandem aliquando Doctores fidei apostolicis eruditi exemplis; sint prædicatorum non prædatores.” Here the reader may see a lively picture of the kind of apostles that flourished at this time; apostles who were more zealous in exacting tithes, and extending their authority, than in propagating the sublime truths and precepts of the gospel. And yet these very apostles are said to have wrought stupendous miracles.

ⁱ Alcuinus apud Wilhelmum Malmesbur. *De gestis regum Anglorum*, lib. i. cap. iv. p. 23, inter *Rerum Anglicar. Scriptores*, Francofurti, A. D. 1601. editos. In this work we find the following passage, which proves what we have said with respect to the unworthy methods that were used in converting the Saxons; “Antiqui Saxones et omnes Fresonum populi, instante Rege Carolo alios præmiis et alios minis sollicitantes ad fidem Christi conversi sunt.” See also two passages in the *Capitularia Regum Francor.* tom. i. p. 246, and 252. From the first of these passages we learn, that those of the Saxons who abandoned the pagan superstitions, were “restored to the liberty they had forfeited by the fate of arms, and freed from the obligation of paying tribute;” and

These seditions, indeed, were soon after renewed, and fomented by Widekind and Albion, two of the most valiant among the Saxon chiefs, who attempted to abolish the Christian worship by the same violent methods which had contributed to its establishment. But the courage and liberality of Charlemagne, alternately employed to suppress this new rebellion, engaged these chiefs to make a public and solemn profession of Christianity in the year 785, and to promise an adherence to that divine religion for the rest of their days.^k To prevent, however, the Saxons from renouncing a religion which they had embraced with reluctance, several bishops were appointed to reside among them, schools also were erected, and monasteries founded, that the means of instruction might not be wanting. The same precautions were employed among the Huns in Pannonia, to maintain in the profession of Christianity that fierce people, whom Charlemagne had converted to the faith, when, exhausted and dejected by various defeats, they were no longer able to make head against his victorious arms, and choose rather to be Christians than *slaves*.^l

VII. Succeeding generations, filled with a grateful sense of the famous exploits which Charlemagne had performed in the service of Christianity, canonized his memory, and turned this bloody *warrior* into an eminent *saint*. In the twelfth century Frederic I. emperor of the Romans, ordered Paschal II. whom he had raised to the pontificate, to enrol the name of this mighty conqueror among the tutelary saints of the church.^m And indeed Charlemagne merited this honour, according to the opinions which prevailed at that period of

The judgment we ought to form of the conversions made by Charlemagne.

in the second, we find the following severe law, that "every Saxon, who contemptuously refused to receive the sacrament of baptism, and persisted in his adherence to paganism, was to be punished with death." While such rewards and punishments were employed in the cause of religion, there was no occasion for miracles to advance its progress, for these motives were sufficient to draw all mankind to an hypocritical and external profession of the gospel; but it is easy to imagine what sort of Christians the Saxons must have been, who were dragooned into the church in this abominable manner. Compare with the authors mentioned in this note, Launojus, *De veteri more baptizandi Judæos et Infideles*, cap. v. vi. p. 703, tom. ii. opp. pars ii. This author assures us that Adrian, the first Roman pontiff of that name, honoured with his approbation Charlemagne's method of converting the Saxons.

^k Eginartus, *De vita Caroli M.* Adam Bremensis, lib. i. cap. viii. See also the writers of the history and exploits of Charlemagne, which are mentioned by Jo. Alb. Fabricius, in his *Bibliotheca Latina Medii ævi*, tom. i. p. 950.

^l Vita S. Rudberti in Henric. Canisii *Lectionibus Antiquis*, tom. iii. pars ii. p. 340. Pauli Debreceeni *Historia Ecclesiæ Reformat. in Hungar et Transilvania a Lampio edita*, pars i. cap. ii. p. 10.

^m Vid. Henr. Canisii, *Lectiones Antiquæ*, tom. iii. pars ii. p. 207. Walchii *Dissert. de Caroli Magni Canonizatione*.

time ; for to have enriched the clergy with large and magnificent donations," and to have extended the boundaries of the church, no matter by what methods, was then considered as the highest merit, and as a sufficient pretension to the honour of *sainthood*. But in the esteem of those who judge of the nature and characters of *sanctity* by the decisions of the gospel upon that head, the *sainted* emperor will appear utterly unworthy of that ghostly dignity. For, not to enter into a particular detail of his vices, whose number counterbalanced that of his virtues, it is undeniably evident, that his ardent and ill-conducted zeal for the conversion of the Huns, Frieslanders, and Saxons, was more animated by the suggestions of ambition, than by a principle of true piety ; and that his main view in these religious exploits was to subdue the converted nations under his dominion, and to tame them to his yoke, which they supported with impatience, and shook off by frequent revolts. It is moreover well known, that this boasted saint made no scruple of seeking the alliance of the infidel Saracens, that he might be more effectually enabled to crush the Greeks, notwithstanding their profession of the Christian religion."

VIII. The many and stupendous miracles, which are said to have been wrought by the Christian missionaries, who were sent to convert the barbarous nations, have lost, in our times, the credit they obtained in former ages. The corrupt discipline that then prevailed, admitted of those fallacious stratagems which are very improperly called *pious* frauds : nor did the heralds of the gospel think it at all unlawful to terrify or allure to the profession of Christianity, by fictitious prodigies, those obdurate hearts, which they could not subdue by reason and argument. It is not, however, to be supposed that all those who acquired renown by their miracles, were chargeable with this fanatical species of artifice and fraud. For as, on the one hand, those ignorant and superstitious nations were disposed to look upon, as miraculous, every event which had an unusual aspect ; so on the other, the Christian doctors themselves were so uninstructed and superficial, so little acquainted with the powers of nature and the relations and connexions of things in their

And of the miracles which are said to have been performed in this century.

n Vid. *Caroli Testamentum in Steph. Balusii Capitularibus Regum Francor.* tom. i. p. 487.

o See Basnage, *Histoire des Juifs*, tom. ix. cap. ii. p. 40.

ordinary course, that uncommon events, however natural, were considered by them as miraculous interpositions of the Most High. This will appear obvious to such as, void of superstition and partiality, read the *Acts of the saints* who flourished in this and the following centuries.

CHAPTER II.

CONCERNING THE CALAMITOUS EVENTS THAT HAPPENED TO THE CHURCH DURING THIS CENTURY.

I. THE eastern empire had now fallen from its former strength and grandeur, through the repeated shocks of dreadful revolutions, and the consuming power of intestine calamities. The throne was now become the seat of terror, inquietude, and suspicion; nor was any reign attended with an uninterrupted tranquillity. In this century three emperors were dethroned, loaded with ignominy, and sent into banishment. Under Leo the Isaurian, and his son Canstantine, surnamed Copronymus, arose that fatal controversy about the worship of images, which proved a source of innumerable calamities and troubles, and weakened almost incredibly the force of the empire. These troubles and dissensions left the Saracens at liberty to ravage the provinces of Asia and Africa, to oppress the Greeks in the most barbarous manner, and to extend their territories and dominion on all sides, as also to oppose every where the progress of Christianity, and in some places to extirpate it entirely. But the troubles of the empire, and the calamities of the church, did not end here; for, about the middle of this century, they were assailed by new enemies, still more fierce and inhuman than those whose usurpations they had hitherto suffered. These were the Turks, a tribe of the Tartars, or at least their descendants, who, breaking forth from the inaccessible wilds about mount Caucasus, overspread Colchis, Iberia, and Albania, rushed from thence into Armenia, and after having subdued the Saracens, turned their victorious arms against the Greeks, whom, in process of time, they reduced under their dominion.

The Saracens
become mas-
ters in the east.

The incursion
of the Turks.

II. In the year 714, the Saracens crossed the sea which separates Spain from Africa, dispersed the army of Roderic, king of the Spanish Goths," whose ^{Their progress in the west.} defeat was principally due to the treachery of their general Julian, and made themselves masters of the greatest part of the territories of this vanquished prince. About the same time the empire of the Visigoths, which had subsisted in Spain above three hundred years, was totally overturned by these fierce and savage invaders, who also took possession of all the maritime coasts of Gaul, from the Pyrenean mountains to the river Rhone, from whence they made frequent incursions, and ravaged the neighbouring countries with fire and sword.

The rapid progress of these bold invaders was, indeed, checked by Charles Martel, who gained a signal victory over them in a bloody action near the city of Poitiers, A. D. 732.^a But the vanquished spoilers soon recovered their strength and their ferocity, and returned with new violence to their devastations. This engaged Charlemagne to lead a formidable army into Spain, with a design to deliver that whole country from the oppressive yoke of the Saracens; but this grand enterprise, though it did not entirely miscarry, was not however attended with the signal success that was expected from it.^c The inroads of this warlike people were felt by many of the western provinces, beside those of France and Spain. Several parts of Italy suffered from their incursions; the island of Sardinia was reduced under their yoke; and Sicily was ravaged and oppressed by them in the most inhuman manner. Hence the Christian religion in Spain and Sardinia suffered inexpressibly under these violent usurpers.

In Germany, and the adjacent countries, the Christians were assailed by another sort of enemies; for all such as adhered to the pagan superstitions beheld them with the most inveterate hatred, and persecuted them with the most unrelenting violence and fury.^d Hence, in several places, castles and fortresses were erected to restrain the incursions of these barbarian zealots.

p Jo. Mariana, *Rerum Hispanicarum*, lib. vi. cap. xxi. Eusebe Renaudot, *Historia Patriarch. Alexandrin.* p. 253. Jo. de Ferreras, *Hist. d'Espagne*, tom. ii. p. 425.

q Paulus Diaconus, *De gestis Longobard.* lib. vi. cap. xlvi. liii. Jo. Mariana, *Rerum Hispan.* lib. vii. cap. iii. Bayle's *Dictionary*, at the article Abderamus. Ferreras, *Hist. d'Espagne*, tom. ii. p. 463.

r Henr. de Bunau, *Teutsche Keyser und Reich's Histoire*, tom. ii. p. 392. Ferreras, *Hist. d'Espagne*, tom. ii. p. 506.

s Servati Lupi *vita Wigherti*, p. 304

PART II.

INTERNAL HISTORY OF THE CHURCH.

CHAPTER I.

CONCERNING THE STATE OF LETTERS AND PHILOSOPHY DURING THIS CENTURY.

1. THERE were not wanting among the Greeks men of genius and talents, who might have contributed to prevent the total decline of literature ; but their zeal was damped by the tumults and desolations that reigned in the empire ; and while both church and state were menaced with approaching ruin, the learned were left destitute of that protection which gives both vigour and success to the culture of the arts and sciences. Hence few or none of the Greeks were at all famous either for elegance of diction, true wit, copious erudition, or a zealous attachment to the study of philosophy, and the investigation of truth. Frigid homilies, insipid narrations of the exploits of pretended saints, vain and subtle disputes about unessential and trivial subjects, vehement and bombastic declamations for or against the erection and worship of images, histories composed without method or judgment, such were the monuments of Grecian learning in this miserable age.

II. It must, however, be observed, that the Aristotelian philosophy was taught every where in the public schools, and was propagated in all places with considerable success. The doctrine of Plato had lost all its credit in the schools, after the repeated sentences of condemnation that had been passed upon the opinions of Origen, and the troubles which the Nestorian and Eutychian controversies had excited in the church ; so that Platonism now was almost confined to the solitary retreats of the monastic orders. Of all the writers in this century, who contributed to the illustration and progress of the Aristotelian philosophy, the most eminent was John Damascenus, who composed a concise, plain, and comprehensive view of the doctrines of the stagirite, for the instruction of the more ignorant, and in a manner adapted to common capacities.

This little work excited numbers, both in Greece and Syria, to the study of that philosophy, whose proselytes increased daily. The Nestorians and Jacobites were also extremely diligent in the study of Aristotle's writings, from whence they armed themselves with sophisms and quibbles, which they employed against the Greeks in the controversy concerning the nature and person of Christ.

III. The literary history of the Latins exhibits innumerable instances of the grossest ignorance,^a which will not however appear surprising to such as consider with attention the state of Europe in this century. If we except some poor remains of learning which were yet to be found at Rome, and in certain cities of Italy,^b the sciences seemed to have abandoned the continent, and fixed their residence in Britain and Ireland.^c Those therefore of the Latin writers, who were distinguished by their learning and genius, were all, a few French and Italians excepted, either British or Scotch, such as Alcuin, Bede, Egbert, Clemens, Dungallus, Acca, and others. Charlemagne, whose political talents were embellished by a considerable degree of learning, and an ardent zeal for the culture of the sciences, endeavoured to dispel the profound ignorance that reigned in his dominions; in which excellent undertaking he was animated and directed by the counsels of Alcuin. With this view he drew, first from Italy, and afterward from Britain and Ireland, by his liberality, eminent men who had distinguished themselves in the various branches of literature; and excited the several orders of the clergy and monks by various encouragements, and the nobility, and others of eminent rank, by his own example, to the pursuit of knowledge in all its branches, human and divine.

The revival of learning among the Latins by Charlemagne.

IV. In the prosecution of this noble design, the greatest part of the bishops erected, by the express order of the emperor, cathedral schools, so called from their lying contiguous to the principal church in each diocese, in which the youth which were set apart for the service of Christ, received a learned and religious education. Those also of the abbots, who had any zeal for the cause of Christianity, opened schools in their monas-

Cathedral and monastic schools erected.

^a Vid. Steph. Baluz. *Observat. ad Reginonem Pruniensem*, p. 540.

^b Lud. Ant. Muratori *Antiq. Italicæ mediæ ævi*, tom. iii. p. 811.

^c Jac. Usserius, *Præf. ad Syllogem Epistolarum Hibernicarum*.

teries, in which the more learned of the fraternity instructed such as were designed for the monastic state, or the sacerdotal order, in the Latin language, and other branches of learning suitable to their future destination. It was formerly believed, that the university of Paris was erected by Charlemagne; but this opinion is rejected by such as have studied with impartiality the history of this age; though it is undeniably evident that this great prince had the honour of laying, in some measure, the foundation of that noble institution, and that the beginnings from which it arose were owing entirely to him.^d However this question be decided, it is undeniably certain, that the zeal of this emperor, for the propagation and advancement of letters, was very great, and manifested its ardour by a considerable number of excellent establishments; nor among others must we pass with silence the famous palatine school, which he erected with a view to banish ignorance from his court; and in which the princes of the blood, and the children of the nobility, were educated by the most learned and illustrious masters of the times.^e

v. These excellent establishments were not, however, attended with the desired success; nor was the improvement of the youth, in learning and virtue, at all proportioned to the pains that were taken, and the bounty that was bestowed to procure them a liberal education. This indeed will not appear surprising, when we consider that the most learned and renowned masters of these times were men of very little genius and abilities, and that their system of erudition and philosophy was nothing more than a lean and ghastly skeleton, equally unfit for ornament and use. The whole circle of the sciences was composed of what they called, the seven liberal arts, viz. grammar, rhetoric, logic, arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy; the three former of which they distinguished by the title of *trivium*, and the four latter by that of *quadrivium*. Nothing can be conceived more wretchedly barbarous than the manner in which these sciences were

But not attended with the desired success.

^d The reasons that have been used to prove Charlemagne the founder of the university of Paris, are accurately collected in Du Boulay, *Historia Academiæ Paris.* tom. i. p. 91. But they have been refuted by the following learned men in a victorious manner, viz. Mabillon, *Act. Sanct. Ord. Benedict.* tom. v. *Præf.* § 181, 182, Launoy, Claud. Joly, *De Scholis.*

^e Boulay, *Historia Academiæ Paris.* tom. i. p. 281. Mabillon, 1. c. § 179.

^f Herm. Conringii *Antiquitat. Academicæ, Diss.* iii. p. 80. Jac. Tomasii *Programmata,* p. 368. *Observation. Halensium,* tom. vi. *Observ.* xiv. p. 118.

taught, as we may easily perceive from Alcuin's treatise concerning them;^g and the dissertations of St. Augustin on the same subject, which were in the highest repute at this time. In the greatest part of the schools, the public teachers ventured no farther than the *trivium*, and confined their instructions to grammar, rhetoric, and logic; they, however, who, after passing the *trivium* and also the *quadrivium*, were desirous of rising yet higher in their literary pursuits, were exhorted to apply themselves to the study of Cassiodore and Boethius, as if the progress of human knowledge was bounded by the discoveries of those two learned writers.

CHAPTER II.

CONCERNING THE DOCTORS AND MINISTERS OF THE CHURCH, AND ITS FORM OF GOVERNMENT DURING THIS CENTURY.

1. That corruption of manners which dishonoured the clergy in the former century, increased, instead of diminishing, in this, and discovered itself under the most odious characters, both in the eastern and western provinces. In the east there arose the most violent dissensions and quarrels among the bishops and doctors of the church, who, forgetting the duties of their stations, and the cause of Christ in which they were engaged, threw the state into combustion by their outward clamours, and their scandalous divisions, and even went so far as to imbrue their hands in the blood of their brethren who differed from them in opinion. In the western world, Christianity was not less disgraced by the lives and actions of those who pretended to be the luminaries of the church, and who ought to have been so in reality, by exhibiting examples of piety and virtue to their flock. The clergy abandoned themselves to their passions without moderation or restraint; they were distinguished by their luxury, their gluttony, and their lust; they gave themselves up to dissipations of various kinds, to the pleasures of hunting, and what was still more remote from their sacred

The vices of the clergy.

^g Alcuini *Opera*, pars ii. p. 1245, edit. Quercetani. It is, however, to be observed, that the treatise of Alcuin here referred to, is not only imperfect, but is almost entirely transcribed from Cassiodore.

character, to military studies^h and enterprises. They had also so far extinguished every principle of fear and shame, that they became incorrigible; nor could the various laws enacted against their vices by Carloman, Pepin, and Charlemagne, at all contribute to set bounds to their licentiousness, or to bring about their reformation.ⁱ

II. It is indeed amazing, that notwithstanding the shocking nature of such vices, especially in a set of men whose profession obliged them to display to the world the attracting lustre of virtuous example; and notwithstanding the perpetual troubles and complaints which these vices occasioned; the clergy were still held, corrupt as they were, in the highest veneration, and were honoured, as a sort of deities, by the submissive multitude. This veneration for the bishops and clergy, and the influence and authority it gave them over the people, were indeed carried much higher in the west than in the eastern provinces; and the reasons of this difference will appear manifest to such as consider the customs and manners that prevailed among the barbarous nations, which were, at this time, masters of Europe, before their conversion to Christianity. All these nations, during their continuance under the darkness of paganism, were absolutely enslaved to their priests, without whose counsel and authority they transacted nothing of the least importance either in civil or military affairs.^k Upon their con-

The veneration in which the clergy were held in the west.

^h Steph. Baluzius, *ad Reginon. Prumiensem*, p. 563. Wilkins, *Concilia Magnæ Britanniae*, tom. i. p. 90.

ⁱ Steph. Baluz. *Capitular. regum Francor.* tom. i. p. 189, 208, 275, 493, &c.

^k Julius Cæsar, *De bello Gallico*, lib. v. cap. 13. "Druides magno sunt apud eos honore; nam fere de omnibus controversiis, publicis privatisque, constituent; et, si quod est admissum facinus, si cædus facta, si de hæreditate si de finibus controversia est, iidem decernunt, præmia, pœnasque constituunt; si qui aut publicus eorum decreto non steterit, sacrificiis interdicunt. Druides a bello abesse consueverunt, neque tributa una cum reliquis pendunt; militiæ vacationem, omniumque rerum habent immunitatem. Tantis excitati præmiis, et sua sponte multi in disciplinam conveniunt, et a parentibus propinquisque mittuntur." Tacitus, *De mor. Germanorum*, cap. 7, p. 384, edit. Gronov. expresses also the power and authority of the priests or Druids in the following terms: "Neque enim animadvertere, neque vincere, neque verberare quidem, nisi sacerdotibus permissum, non quasi in pœnam, nec ducis jussu, sed velut Deo imperante." And again, cap. ii. "Silentium per sacerdotes, quibus et tum coercendi jus est, imperatur." Helmoldus, *Chron. Sclavorum*, lib. i. cap. xxxvi. p. 90, expresses himself to the same purpose, "Major Flaminis, quam Regis, apud ipsos veneratio est." And again, lib. ii. cap. xii. p. 235. "Rex apud eos modicæ æstimationis est comparatione Flaminis. Ille enim responsa perquirat. Rex et populus ad illius nutum pendent." This ancient custom of honouring their priests, and submitting in all things to their decisions, was still preserved by the Germans, and the other European nations, after their conversion to Christianity; and this furnishes a satisfactory answer to that question, viz. how it came to pass that the Christian priesthood obtained in the west that enormous degree of authority, which is so contrary to the positive precepts of Christ, and the nature and genius of his Divine religion.

version to Christianity, they therefore thought proper to transfer to the ministers of their new religion, the rights and privileges of their former priests; and the Christian bishops, in their turn, were not only ready to accept the offer, but used all their diligence and dexterity to secure and assert to themselves and their successors, the dominion and authority which the ministers of paganism had usurped over an ignorant and brutish people.

III. The honours and privileges, which the western nations had voluntarily conferred upon the bishops, and other doctors of the church, were now augmented with new and immense accessions of opulence and authority. The endowments of the church and monasteries, and the revenues of the bishops, were hitherto considerable; but in this century a new and ingenious method was found out of acquiring much greater riches to the church, and of increasing its wealth through succeeding ages. An opinion prevailed universally at this time, though its authors are not known, that the punishment which the righteous Judge of the world has reserved for the transgressions of the wicked, was to be prevented and annulled, by liberal donations to God, to the saints, to the churches, and clergy. In consequence of this notion, the great and opulent, who were, generally speaking, the most remarkable for their flagitious and abominable lives, offered, out of the abundance which they had received by inheritance, or acquired by rapine, rich donations to departed saints, their ministers upon earth, and the keepers of the temples that were erected in their honour, in order to avoid the sufferings and penalties annexed by the priests to transgression in this life,¹ and to escape the misery denounced against the wicked in a future state. This new and commodious method of making atonement for iniquity, was the principal source of those immense treasures which from this period began to flow in upon the clergy, the churches, and monasteries, and continued to enrich them through succeeding ages down to the present time.^m

The riches increased and their privileges multiplied.

¹ The temporal penalties here mentioned were rigorous fasts, bodily pains and mortifications, long and frequent prayers, pilgrimages to the tombs of saints and martyrs, and such like austerities. These were the penalties which the priests imposed upon such as had confessed their crimes; and as they were singularly grievous to those who had led voluptuous lives, and were desirous of continuing in the same course of licentious pleasure, effeminacy, and ease; the richer sort of transgressors embraced eagerly this new method of expiation, and willingly gave a part of their substance to avoid such severe and rigorous penalties.

^m Hence, by a known form of speech, they who offered donations to the church or

iv. But here it is highly worthy of observation, that the donations which princes and persons of the first rank presented, in order to make expiation for their sins, and to satisfy the justice of God, and the demands of the clergy, did not only consist in those *private* possessions, which every citizen may enjoy, and with which the churches and convents were already abundantly enriched; no, these donations were carried to a much more extravagant length, and the church was endowed with several of those *public* grants, which are peculiar to princes and sovereign states, and which are commonly called *regalia*, or royal domains. Emperors, kings, and princes, signalized their superstitious veneration for the clergy, by investing bishops, churches, and monasteries, in the possession of whole provinces, cities, castles, and fortresses, with all the rights and prerogatives of sovereignty that were annexed to them under the dominion of their former masters. Hence it came to pass that they, who, by their holy profession, were appointed to proclaim to the world the vanity of human grandeur, and to inspire into the minds of men, by their instructions and their examples, a noble contempt of sublunary things, became themselves scandalous spectacles of worldly pomp, ambition, and splendour; were created *dukes*, *counts*, and *marquises*, judges, legislators, and sovereigns; and not only gave laws to nations, but also, upon many occasions, gave battle to their enemies at the head of numerous armies of their own raising. It is here that we are to look for the source of those dreadful tumults and calamities that spread desolation through Europe in after times, particularly of those bloody wars concerning *investitures*, and those obstinate contentions and disputes about the *regalia*.

v. The excessive donations that were made to the clergy, and that extravagant liberality that augmented daily the treasures of the European churches, to which these donations and this liberality were totally confined, began in this century; nor do we find any examples of the like munificence in preceding times. From hence we may conclude that these donations were owing to customs peculiar to the European nations, and

They are invested with principalities and royal domains.

The causes of this excessive liberality to the clergy.

clergy were said to do this for the redemption of their souls; and the gifts themselves were generally called the price of transgression. See Lud. Ant. Muratori *Diss. de Redemptione Pecatorum*, in his *Antiquitates Italicae mediæ ævi*, tom. v. p. 712.

to the maxims of policy that were established among those warlike people. The kings of these nations, who were employed either in usurpation or self-defence, endeavoured, by all means, to attach warmly to their interests those whom they considered as their friends and clients; and, for this purpose, they distributed among them extensive territories, cities, and fortresses, with the various rights and privileges belonging to them, reserving to themselves no more than the supreme dominion, and also the military service of their powerful vassals. This then being the method of governing customary in Europe, it was esteemed by princes a high instance of political prudence to distribute among the bishops, and other Christian doctors; the same sort of donations that they had formerly made to their generals and clients; for it is not to be believed, that superstition alone was always the principle that drew forth their liberality. They expected more fidelity and loyalty from a set of men, who were bound by the obligations of religion, and consecrated to the service of God, than from a body of nobility, composed of fierce and impetuous warriors, and accustomed to little else than bloodshed and rapine. And they hoped also to check the seditious and turbulent spirits of their vassals, and maintain them in their obedience, by the influence and authority of the bishops, whose commands were highly respected, and whose spiritual thunderbolts, rendered formidable by ignorance, struck terror into the boldest and most resolute hearts.ⁿ

n The account here given of the rise of the clergy to such enormous degrees of opulence and authority, is corroborated by the following remarkable passage of William of Malmesbury, lib. v. *De rebus gestis regum Angliæ*, "Carolus Magnus, pro contundenda gentium illarum ferocia, omnes pene terras ecclesiis contulerat, consiliosissime perpendens, nolle sacri ordinis homines, tam facile quam Laicos, fidelitatem Domini rejicere; præterea si Laici rebellarent, illos posse excommunicationis auctoritate et potentia severitate compescere." This is, doubtless, the true reason why Charlemagne, who was far from being a superstitious prince, or a slave to the clergy, augmented so vastly the jurisdiction of the Roman pontiff in Germany, Italy, and the other countries, where he had extended his conquests, and accumulated upon the bishops such ample possessions. He expected more loyalty and submission from the clergy than from the laity; and he augmented the riches and authority of the former, in order to secure his throne against the assaults of the latter. As the bishops were universally held in the highest veneration, he made use of their influence in checking the rebellious spirit of his dukes, counts, and knights, who were frequently very troublesome. Charlemagne, for instance, had much to fear from the dukes of Benevento, Spoleto, and Capua, when the government of the Lombards was overturned; he therefore made over a considerable part of Italy to the Roman pontiff, whose ghostly authority, opulence, and threatenings, were so proper to restrain those powerful and vindictive princes from seditious insurrections, or to quell such tumults as they might venture to excite. Nor was Charlemagne the only prince who honoured the clergy from such political views: the other kings and princes of Europe acted much in the same manner, and from the same principles, as will appear evident to all who consider, with attention, the forms of government, and the methods of

VI. This prodigious accession to the opulence and authority of the clergy in the west began at their head, the Roman pontiff, and spread gradually from thence among the inferior bishops, and also among the sacerdotal and monastic orders. The barbarous nations, who received the gospel, looked upon the bishop of Rome as the successor of their chief *druid*, or high priest. And as this tremendous druid had enjoyed, under the darkness of paganism, a boundless authority, and had been treated with a degree of veneration, that, through its servile excess, degenerated into terror ; so the barbarous nations, upon their conversion to Christianity, thought proper to confer upon the chief of the bishops the same honours and the same authority that had formerly been vested in their *archdruid*." The Roman pontiff received, with something more than a mere ghostly delight, these august privileges ; and lest, upon any change of affairs, attempts might be made to deprive him of them, he strengthened his title to these extraordinary honours, by a variety of passages drawn from ancient history, and, what was still more astonishing, by arguments of a religious nature. This conduct of a superstitious people swelled the arrogance of the Roman druid to an enormous size ; and gave to the see of Rome that high pre-eminence, and that despotic authority, in civil and political matters, that were unknown to former ages. Hence, among other unhappy circumstances, arose that most monstrous and most pernicious opinion, that such persons as were excluded from the communion of the church by the pontiff himself, or any of the bishops, forfeited thereby, not only their civil rights and advantages as citizens, but even the common claims and privileges of humanity. This horrid opinion, which was a fatal source of wars, massacres, and rebellions without number, and which contributed more than any thing else to augment and confirm the papal authority, was, un-

governing, that took place in this century. So that the excessive augmentation of sacerdotal opulence and authority, which many look upon as the work of superstition alone, was, in many instances, an effect of political prudence. We shall consider, presently, the terrors of *excommunication*, which William of Malmesbury touches but cursorily in the latter words of the passage above quoted.

o Cesar speaks thus of the chief or archdruid : " His omnibus druidibus præest unus, qui Summan inter eos, Celtas, habet auctoritatem. Hoc mortuo, si quis ex reliquis excellit dignitate, succedit. At si sunt plures pares, suffragio Druidum adlegitur ; nonnunquam etiam de principatu armis contendunt." Vide Jul. Cesar, *De bello Gallico*, lib. vi. cap. xii.

happily for Europe, borrowed by Christians, or rather by the clergy, from the pagan superstitions.^p

VII. We see in the annals of the French nation the following remarkable and shocking instance of the enormous power that was at this time vested in the Roman pontiff. Pepin, who was mayor of the palace to Childeric III. and who, in the exercise of that high office, was possessed, in reality, of the royal power and authority, not contented with this, aspired to the titles and honours of majesty, and formed the design of dethroning his sovereign. For this purpose, the states of the realm were assembled by Pepin, A. D. 751; and though they were devoted to the interests of this ambitious usurper, they gave it as their opinion that the bishop of Rome was previously to be consulted whether the execution of such a project was lawful or not. In consequence of this, ambassadors were sent by Pepin to Zachary, the reigning pontiff, with the following question; "Whether the divine law did not permit a valiant and warlike people to dethrone a pusillanimous and indolent monarch, who was incapable of discharging any of the functions of royalty, and to substitute in his place one more worthy to rule, and who had already rendered most important services to the

The Roman pontiff obtains an addition to his authority by favouring the ambition of Pepin.

^p Though *excommunication*, from the time of Constantine the Great, was, in every part of the Christian world, attended with many disagreeable effects, yet its highest terrors were confined to Europe, where its aspect was truly formidable and hideous. It acquired also, in the eighth century, new accessions of terror; so that, from that period, the *excommunication* practised in Europe differed entirely from that which was in use in other parts of Christendom. Excommunicated persons were indeed considered, in all places, as objects of aversion both to God and men; but they were not, on this account, robbed of the privileges of citizens, nor of the rights of humanity; much less were those kings and princes, whom an insolent bishop had thought proper to exclude from the communion of the church, supposed to forfeit, on that account, their crowns or their territories. But from this century it was quite otherwise in Europe; excommunication received that infernal power which dissolved all connexions; so that those whom the bishops, or their chief, excluded from church communion, were degraded to a level with the beasts. Under this horrid sentence, the king, the ruler, the husband, the father, nay, even the *man*, forfeited all their rights, all their advantages, the claims of nature, and the privileges of society. What then was the origin of this unnatural power which excommunication acquired? It was briefly as follows: upon the conversion of the barbarous nations to Christianity, these new and ignorant proselytes confounded the *excommunication* in use among Christians, with that which had been practised in the times of paganism by the priests of the gods, and considered them as of the same nature and effect. The Roman pontiffs, on the other hand, were too artful not to countenance and encourage this error; and therefore employed all sorts of means to gain credit to an opinion so proper to gratify their ambition, and to aggrandize, in general, the episcopal order. That this is the true origin of the extensive and horrid influence of the European and papal excommunication, will appear evident to such as cast an eye upon the following passage of Cesar, *De bello Gallico*, lib. vi. cap. xiii. "Si quis aut privatus aut publicus Druidum decreto non steterit, sacrificiis interdicunt. Hæc pœna est apud eos gravissima. Quibus ita est interdictum, ii numero impiorum et sceleratorum habentur, iis omnes decedunt, aditum eorum sermonemque defugiunt, ne quid ex contagione incommodi accipiant; neque iis petentibus jus redditur, neque honos ullus communicatur."

state?" The situation of Zachary, who stood much in need of the succours of Pepin against the Greeks and Lombards, rendered his answer such as the usurper desired. And when this favourable decision of the Roman oracle was published in France, the unhappy Childeric was stripped of royalty without the least opposition; and Pepin, without the smallest resistance from any quarter, stepped into the throne of his master and his sovereign. Let the abettors of the papal authority see how they can justify in Christ's pretended vicegerent upon earth, a decision which is so glaringly repugnant to the laws and precepts of the divine Saviour.^q This decision was solemnly confirmed by Stephen II. the successor of Zachary, who undertook a journey into France, in the year 754, in order to solicit assistance against the Lombards, and who, at the same time dissolved the obligation of the oath of fidelity and allegiance which Pepin had sworn to Childeric, and violated by his usurpation, in the year 751. And to render his title to the crown as sacred as possible, Stephen anointed and crowned him, with his wife and two sons, for the second time.^r

The advantages derived to the see of Rome from the attachments of its bishops to the kings of France.

VIII. This compliance of the Roman pontiffs proved an abundant source of opulence and credit to the church, and to its aspiring ministers. When that part of Italy, which was as yet subject to the Grecian empire, was involved in confusion and trouble, by the seditions and tumults which arose from the imperial edicts^s against the erection and wor-

^q See Le Cointe *Annal. Franciæ. Eccles.* Mezeray, Daniel, and the other Gallic and German historians, concerning this important event; but particularly Bossuet *Defens. declarationis Cleri Gallicani*, pars i. p. 225. Petr. Rival. *Dissertationis Histor. et Critiques sur divers sujets*, Diss. ii. p. 70. Diss. iii. p. 156. Lond. 1726, in 8vo. Henr. de Bunau, *Historia Imperii Germanici*, tom. ii. p. 288. This remarkable event is not indeed related in the same manner by all historians, and it is generally represented under the falsest colours by those who, from a spirit of blind zeal and excessive adulation, seize every occasion of exalting the dignity and authority of the bishops of Rome. Such writers assert that it was by Zachary's authority as pontiff, and not in consequence of his opinion as a ca-suist or divine, that the crown was taken from the head of Childeric, and placed upon that of Pepin. But this the French absolutely and justly deny. Had it, however, been so, the crime of the pontiff would have been much greater than it was in reality.

^r Pepin had been anointed, by the legate Boniface at Soissons, soon after his election; but thinking that ceremony performed by the pope, would recommend him more to the respect of his subjects, he desired that it should be performed anew by Stephen. Pepin is the first French monarch who received this unction as a ceremony of coronation, at least according to the reports of the most credible historians. His predecessors were proclaimed by being lifted up on a shield, and the *holy phial* of Clovis is now universally regarded as fabulous. The custom of anointing kings at their coronation was, however, more ancient than the time of Pepin, and was observed long before that period both in Scotland and Spain. See Edmund Martene, *De Antiq. Eccles. Ritib.* tom. iii. cap. x. As also Bunau, *Historia Imperii Germanici*, tom. ii. p. 301, 366.

^s The author has here in view the edicts of Leo Isauricus and Constantine Copronymus. The former published, in the year 726, a famous edict against the worship

ship of images ; the kings of the Lombards employed the united influence of their arms and negotiations in order to terminate these contests. Their success indeed was only advantageous to themselves ; for they managed matters so as to become, by degrees, masters of the Grecian provinces in Italy, which were subject to the exarch, who resided at Ravenna. Nay, one of these monarchs, named Aistulphus, carried his views still further. Elated with these new accessions to his dominions, he meditated the conquest of Rome and its territory, and formed the ambitious project of reducing all Italy under the yoke of the Lombards. The terrified pontiff, Stephen II. addresses himself to his powerful patron and protector Pepin, represents to him his deplorable condition, and implores his assistance. The French monarch embarks with zeal in the cause of the suppliant pontiff ; crosses the Alps, A. D. 754, with a numerous army ; and having defeated Aistulphus, obliged him, by a solemn treaty, to deliver up to the see of Rome the exarchate of Ravenna, Pentapolis, and all The donation of Pepin to that see. the cities, castles, and territories, which he had seized in the Roman dukedom. It was not, however, long before the Lombard prince violated, without remorse, an engagement which he had entered into with reluctance. In the year 755, he laid siege to Rome for the second time, but was again obliged to sue for peace by the victorious arms of Pepin, who returned into Italy, and forcing the Lombard to execute the treaty he had so audaciously violated, made a new grant of the exarchate, and

of images, which occasioned many contests and much disturbance both in church and state ; and the latter assembled at Constantinople, in the year 754, a council of three hundred and thirty-eight bishops, who unanimously condemned, not only the *worship*, but also the *use* of images.

t See Car. Sigonius, *De Regno Italiae*, lib. iii. p. 202, tom. ii. opp. Bunau, *Historia Imperii Germanici*, tom. ii. p. 301, 366. Muratori *Annali d' Italiae*, tom. iv. p. 310. The real limits of the *exarchate*, granted by Pepin to the Roman pontiff, have been much controverted among the learned, and have particularly in our times, employed the researches of several eminent writers. The bishops of Rome extend the limits of this *exarchate* as far as they can with any appearance of decency or probability ; while their adversaries are as zealous in contracting this famous grant within narrower bounds. See Lud. Ant. Murator. *Droits de l' Empire sur l' Etat Ecclesiastique*, cap. i. ii. As also his *Antiquitat. Ital. medii ævi*, tom. i. p. 64, 68, 986, 987. The same author treats the matter with more circumspection, tom. v. p. 790. This controversy can only be terminated with facility by an inspection of Pepin's grant of the territory in question. Fontanini, in his first defence of the temporal jurisdiction of the see of Rome over the city of *Comachio*, written in Italian, intimates, that this grant is still in being, and even makes use of some phrases that are contained in it, see the pages 242 and 346 of that work. This however will scarcely be believed. Were it indeed true that such a deed is yet in being, its being published to the world would be, undoubtedly, unfavourable to the pretensions and interests of the church of Rome. It is at least certain, that the recent

of Pentapolis to the Roman pontiff and his successors in the apostolic see of St. Peter. And thus was the bishop of Rome raised to the rank of a temporal prince.

ix. After the death of Pepin, a new attack was made upon the patrimony of St. Peter, by Dideric, king of the Lombards, who invaded the territories that had been granted by the French monarch to the see of Rome. In this extremity, Adrian I. who was pontiff at that time, fled for succour to Charles, the son of Pepin, who, on account of his heroic exploits, was afterward distinguished by the name of Charlemagne. This prince, whose enterprising genius led him to seize with avidity every opportunity of extending his conquests, and whose veneration for the Roman see was carried very far, as much from the dictates of policy as superstition, adopted immediately the cause of the trembling pontiff. He passed the Alps with a formidable army, A. D. 774, overturned the empire of the Lombards in Italy, which had subsisted above two hundred years, sent their exiled monarch into France, and proclaimed himself king of the Lombards. These conquests offered to Charlemagne an occasion of visiting Rome, where he not only confirmed the grants which had been made by his father to that see, but added to them new donations, and made to the Roman pontiffs a cession of several cities and provinces in Italy, which had not been contained in Pepin's grant. What those cities and provinces were, is a question difficult to be resolved at this period of time, as it is perplexed with much obscurity from the want of authentic records, by which alone it can be decided with certainty.^u

dispute between the emperor Joseph and the Roman pontiff, concerning the city of Comacchio, the partisans of the latter, though frequently called upon by those of the emperor to produce this grant, refused constantly to comply with this demand. On the other hand it must be confessed, that Blonchinus, in his *Prolegom. ad Anastasium de vitis pontif. Rom.* p. 55, has given us, from a Farnesian manuscript, a specimen of this grant, which seems to carry the marks of remote antiquity. Be that as it may, a multitude of witnesses unite in assuring us, that the remorse of a wounded conscience was the source of Pepin's liberality, and that his grant to the Roman pontiff was the superstitious remedy by which he hoped to expiate his enormities, and particularly his horrid perfidy to his master Childeric.

^u See Car. Sigonius, *De regno Italiae*, lib. iii. p. 223, tom. ii. opp. Bunau. *Historia Imperii Germanici*, tom. ii. p. 368. Petr. de Marca, *De concordia sacerdotii et imperii*, lib. i. cap. xii. p. 67. Lud. Anton. Muratori *Droits de l'Empire sur l'Etat Ecclesiastique*, cap. ii. p. 147. Conrigius, *De Imperio Roman. German.* cap. vi. The extent of Charlemagne's grant to the see of Rome is as much disputed as that of Pepin's, between the partisans of the pope, and those of the emperors. They who plead the cause of the Roman see, maintain that Corsica, Sardinia, Sicily, the territory of Sabino, the dutchy of Spoleto, and several other places were solemnly granted by Charlemagne to St. Peter and his successors. They, on the other hand, who assert the rights of the

x. By this act of liberality, which seems to carry in it the contradictory characters of policy and imprudence, Charlemagne opened for himself a passage to the empire of the west, and to the supreme dominion over the city of Rome and its territory, upon which the western empire seemed then to depend.^w He had no doubt been meditating for a considerable time this arduous project, which his father Pepin had probably formed before him, but the circumstances of the times obliged him to wait for a favourable occasion of putting it in execution. This was offered him in the year 800, when the affairs of the Greeks were reduced to the utmost extremity after the death of Leo III. and the barbarous murder of his son Constantine, and while the impious Irene held the reins of empire. This favourable opportunity was seized with avidity by Charles, who set out for Rome, where he was received with the utmost demonstrations of zeal by the sovereign pontiff,^x who had entered into his views, and persuaded the people, elated at this time with high notions of their independency and elective power, to unite their

The motives to which it is to be attributed.

emperor, diminish as far as they can the munificence of Charles, and confine this new grant within narrow limits. The reader may consult upon this subject the authors of the present age, who have published their opinions concerning the pretensions of the emperors and the popes to the cities of Commachio and Florence, and the duchies of Parma and Placentia; but above all, the learned Berret's excellent treatise, entitled, *Dissertatio Chorographica de Italia medii ævi*, f. 33. The spirit of party seems in this controversy, as in many others, to have blinded the disputants on both sides of the question; and this, together with the difficulty of avoiding mistakes upon a point involved in such deep obscurity, has in many cases rendered the truth invisible to both the contending parties. With respect to the motives that induced Charlemagne to make this grant, they are much less doubtful than the extent of the grant itself. Adrian affirms, that the monarch's view was to *atone for his sins* by this act of liberality to the church, as we see in a letter from that pontiff to Charlemagne, which is published in Muratori's *Scriptores rerum Italicar.* tom. iii. pars. ii. p. 265, and of which the following passage is remarkable; "Venientes ad nos de Capua, quam beato Petro apostolorum principi pro mercede animæ vestræ atque sempiterna memoria cum cæteris civitatibus obtulistis." It is not indeed unlikely, that Charlemagne, who affected that kind of piety which was the characteristic of this barbarous age, mentioned this superstitious motive in the act of cession, by which he confirmed his donation to the church; but such as are acquainted with the character of this prince, and the history of this period, will be cautious in attributing his generosity to this religious principle alone. His grand motive was, undoubtedly, of an ambitious kind; he was obstinately bent upon adding the western empire to his dominions, and the success of this grand project depended much on the consent and assistance of the Roman pontiff, whose approbation, in those times, was sufficient to sanctify the most iniquitous projects; so that Charlemagne lavished gifts upon the bishops of Rome, that, by their assistance, he might assume, with a certain air of decency, the empire of the west, and confirm his new dominion in Italy. This policy we have taken notice of already, and it must appear manifest to all who view things with the smallest degree of impartiality and attention.

w Charles in reality was already emperor of the west, that is, the most powerful of the European monarchs. He wanted therefore nothing more than the title of emperor, and the supreme dominion in Rome and its territory, both of which he obtained by the assistance of Leo III.

x Leo III,

suffrages in favour of this prince, and to proclaim him emperor of the west.^y

xi. Charles, upon his elevation to the empire of the west and the government of Rome, seems to have reserved to himself only the supreme dominion, and the unalienable rights of majesty, and to have granted to the church of Rome a subordinate jurisdiction over that great city, and its annexed territory.^z This grant was undoubtedly suggested to him by the ambitious pontiff as a matter of sacred and indispensable obligation, and many fictitious deeds were probably produced to make out the pretensions, and justify the claims of the church to this high degree of temporal authority and civil jurisdiction. In order to reconcile the new emperor to this grant, it was no doubt alleged, that Constantine the Great, his renowned predecessor, when he removed the seat of the empire to Constantinople, delivered up Rome,

The nature and form of the Roman pontiff's jurisdiction.

y See the historians who have transmitted to us accounts of this century, and more especially Bunau, *Historia Imperii Roman. German.* tom. ii. p. 537. The partisans of the Roman pontiffs generally maintain, that Leo III. by a *divine* right, vested in him as bishop of Rome, transported the western empire from the Greeks to the Franks, and conferred it upon Charlemagne, the monarch of the latter. From hence they conclude, that the Roman pontiff, as the vicar of Christ, is the supreme lord of the whole earth, and, in a particular manner, of the Roman empire. The temerity of these pretensions, and the absurdity of this reasoning, are exposed with much learning and judgment by the celebrated Fred. Spanheim, *De ficta translatione imperii in Carolum M. per Leonem III.* tom. ii. opp. p. 557.

z That Charlemagne, in effect, preserved entire his supreme authority over the city of Rome and its adjacent territory, gave law to the citizens by judges of his own appointment, punished malefactors, enjoyed the prerogatives, and exercised all the functions of royalty, has been demonstrated by several of the learned in the most ample and satisfactory manner, and confirmed by the most unexceptionable and authentic testimonies. To be convinced of this, it will be sufficient to consult Muratori's *Droits de l'Empire sur l'État Ecclesiastique*, chap. vi. p. 77. And indeed they must have a strange power of resisting the clearest evidence, who are absurd enough to assert, as does Fontanini, in his treatise entitled *Dominio della S. Sede sopra Comachio*, Diss. i. e. 95, 96, that Charles sustained at Rome the character of the advocate of the Roman church, and not that of its sovereign or its lord, the dominion of the pontiffs being unlimited and universal. On the other hand, we must acknowledge ingenuously that the power of the pontiff, both in the city of Rome and its annexed territory, was very great, and that, in several cases, he seemed to act with princely authority. But the extent and the foundations of that authority are matters hid in the deepest obscurity, and have thereby given occasion to endless disputes. Muratori maintains, in his work above cited, p. 102, that the bishop of Rome discharged the function of *exarch*, or *vicar*, to the emperor, an opinion which Clement XI. rejected as injurious to the papal dignity, and which indeed does not appear to have any solid foundation. After a careful examination of all the circumstances that can contribute toward the solution of this perplexed question, the most probable account of the matter seems to be this; that the Roman pontiff possessed the city of Rome and its territory by the same right that he held the exarchate of Ravenna, and the other lands of which he received the grant from Charlemagne; that is to say, that he possessed Rome as a feudal tenure, though charged with less marks of dependence than other fiefs generally are, on account of the lustre and dignity of a city which had been so long the capital of the empire. This opinion derives much strength from what we shall have occasion to observe in the following note, and it has the peculiar advantage of reconciling the jarring testimonies of ancient writers, and the various records of antiquity relating to this point.

the old metropolis, with its adjacent territories, commonly called the Roman dukedom, to be possessed and governed by the church, and that with no other restriction, than that this should be no detriment to his supreme dominion; and it was insinuated to Charles, that he could not depart from the rule established by that pious emperor, without incurring the wrath of God, and the indignation of St. Peter.^a

XII. While the power and opulence of the Roman pontiffs were rising to the greatest height by the events which we have now been relating, they received a mortifying check in consequence of a quarrel which broke out between these haughty pontiffs and the Grecian emperors. Leo the Isaurian, and his son Constantine Copronymus, incensed at the zeal which Gregory II. and III. discovered

The Grecian emperors check the ambition of the Roman pontiffs, and diminish their revenues.

a Most writers are of opinion, that Constantine's pretended grant was posterior to this period, and was forged in the tenth century. It appears to me, on the contrary, that this fictitious grant was in being in the eighth century, and it is extremely probable that both Adrian and his successor Leo III. made use of it to persuade Charlemagne to that donation. In favour of this opinion, we have the unexceptionable testimony of Adrian himself in his letter to Charlemagne, which is published in Muratori's *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, tom. iii. pars ii. p. 194, and which is extremely worthy of an attentive perusal. In this letter Adrian exhorts Charles, before his elevation to the empire, to order the restitution of all the grants and donations that had formerly been made to St. Peter, and to the church of Rome. In this demand also he distinguishes in the plainest manner, the donation of Constantine from those of the other princes and emperors, and what is particularly remarkable, from the *exarchate* which was the gift of Pepin, and even from the additions that Charles had already made to his father's grant; from whence we may justly conclude, that by the *donation* of Constantine, Adrian meant the city of Rome and its annexed territory. He speaks first of this grant in the following terms; "*Deprecamur vestram Excellantiam—pro Dei amore et ipsius clavigeri regni cœlorum—ut secundum promissionem quam polliciti estis eidem Dei apostolo pro animæ vestræ mercede et stabilitate regni vestri, omnia nostris temporibus adimplere jubeatis—et sicut temporibus beati Silvestri Romani pontificis, a sanctæ recordationis piissimo Constantino M. Imperatore, per ejus largitatem,*" here Constantine's donation is evidently mentioned, "*sancta Dei catholica et apostolica Romana ecclesia elevata atque exaltata est, et potestatem in his Hesperiaë partibus largiri dignatus est: ita et in his vestris felicissimis temporibus atque nostris sancta Dei ecclesia germinet—et amplius atque amplius exaltata permaneat—quis ecce novus Christianissimus Dei gratia Constantinus imperator,*" here we see Charles, who at that time was only a *king*, styled *emperor* by the pontiff, and compared with Constantine, "*his temporibus surrexit, per quem omnia Deus sanctæ suæ ecclesiæ—largiri dignatus est.*" So much for that part of the letter that relates to Constantine's grant; as to the other donations which the pontiff evidently distinguishes from it, observe what follows; "*Sed et cuncta alia quæ per diversos Imperatores, Patricios, etiam et alios Deum timentes, pro eorum animæ mercede et venia delictorum, in partibus Tusciæ, Spoletio, seu Benevento, atque Corsica, simul et Pavinensi patrimonio, beato Petro apostolo concessa sunt, et per nefandam gentem Longobardorum per annorum spatia abstracta et ablata sunt vestris temporibus, restituantur.*" The pontiff intimates further, that all these grants were carefully preserved in the office of the Lateran, and that he sends them to Charles by his legates. "*Unde et plures donationes in sacro nostro scrinio Lateranensi reconditas habemus, tamen et pro satisfactione Christianissimi regni vestri, per jam fatos viros, ad demonstrandum eas vobis, direximus, et pro hoc petimus eximiam præcellentiam vestram, ut in integro ipsa patrimonia beato Petro et nobis restituere jubeatis.*" By this it appears that Constantine's grant was now in being among the archives of the Lateran, and was sent to Charlemagne with the other donations of kings and princes, whose examples were made use of to excite his liberality to the church.

for the worship of images, not only confiscated the treasures and lands which the church of Rome possessed in Sicily, Calabria, and Apulia, but moreover withdrew the bishops of these countries, and also the various provinces and churches of Illyricum from the jurisdiction of the Roman see, and subjected them to the spiritual dominion of the bishop of Constantinople. And so inflexibly were the Grecian emperors bent upon humbling the arrogance of the Roman pontiffs, that no entreaties, supplications, nor threats could engage them to abandon their purpose, or to restore this rich and signal portion of St. Peter's patrimony to his greedy successors.^b It is here that we must look for the original source, and the principal cause of that vehement contest between the Roman pontiff and the bishop of Constantinople, which in the following century divided the Greek and Latin churches, and was so pernicious to the interests and advancement of true Christianity. These lamentable divisions, which wanted no new incident to foment them, were nevertheless augmented by a controversy which arose in this century, concerning the *derivation of the Holy Spirit*, which we shall have occasion to mention more largely in its proper place. But it is more than probable that this controversy would have been terminated with the utmost facility, had not the spirits of the contending parties been previously exasperated by disputes founded upon avarice and ambition, and carried on without either moderation or decency, by the *holy* patriarchs of Rome and Constantinople, in defence of their respective pretensions.

XIII. The monastic discipline was extremely relaxed at this time both in the eastern and western provinces, and as appears by the concurring testimonies of the writers of this century, was fallen into a total decay. The only monks who escaped this general corruption, were they who passed their days in the deserts of Egypt, Syria, and Mesopotamia, amidst the austerities of a wretched life, and remote from all the comforts of human society; yet the merit of having preserved their discipline was sadly counterbalanced by the gross ignorance, the fanatical madness, and the sordid superstition that reigned among these miserable hermits. Those of the monastic

The monastic discipline fallen into decay.

^b See Mich. Le Quien's *Oriens Christianus*, tom. i. p. 96. Among the Greek writers also Theophanes and others acknowledge the fact; but they are not entirely agreed about the reasons to which it is to be attributed.

orders who lived nearer cities and populous towns, troubled frequently the public tranquillity by the tumults and seditions they fomented among the multitude, so that it became necessary to check their rebellious ambition by the severe laws that were enacted against them by Constantine Copronymus, and other emperors. The greatest part of the western monks followed, at this time, the rule of St. Benedict; though there were every where convents which adopted the discipline of other orders.^c But as they increased in opulence they lost sight of all rules, and submitted at length to no other discipline than that of intemperance, voluptuousness, and sloth.^d Charlemagne attempted by various edicts to put a stop to this growing evil; but his efforts were attended with little success.^e

XIV. This universal depravity and corruption of the monks, gave rise to a new order of priests in the west, which was a sort of middle order between the *monks* or *regulars*, and the *secular clergy*. The origin of the order of canons. This new species of ecclesiastics adopted the monastic discipline and manner of life, so far as to have their dwelling and their table in common, and to assemble themselves at certain hours for divine service; but they entered not into the vows which were peculiar to the monks, and they were also appointed to discharge the ministerial functions in certain churches which were committed to their pastoral direction. These ecclesiastics were at first called *fratres dominici*, but soon after received the name of *canons*.^f The common opinion attributes the institution of this order to Chrodegangus, bishop of Metz; nor is this opinion destitute of truth.^g For though before this time there were in Italy, Africa, and other provinces, convents of ecclesiastics, who

c See Mabillon *Præf. ad acta SS. Ord. Benedicti*, Sæc. i. p. 24, and Sæc. iv. part i. p. 26.

d The author mentioned in the preceding note, discourses with a noble frankness and courage concerning the corruption of the monks and its various causes, in the same work, *Præf. ad Sæc. iv. part i. p. 64*.

e See the *Capitularia Caroli*, published by Baluzius, tom. i. p. 148, 157, 237, 355, 366, 375, 503. Laws so severe, and so often repeated, show evidently that the corruption of the monks must have been truly enormous.

f See Le Beuf *Mémoires sur l'Histoire d'Auxerre*, tom. i. p. 174, the Paris edition, published in 1743, in 4to.

g See, for an account of Chrodegangus, the *Histoire Littéraire de la France*, tom. iv. p. 128, Calmet, *Histoire de Lorraine*, tom. i. p. 513. *Acta Sanctor.* tom. i. *Martii*, p. 452. The rule which he prescribed to his canons, may be seen in Le Cointe's *Annales Francor. Eccles.* tom. v. *ad A. 757*, § 35; as also in the *Concilia Labbei*, tom. vii. 1444. He is not, however, the author of the rule which is published in his name, in the *Spicilegium veter. Scriptor.* tom. i. p. 565. Longueval, in his *Histoire de l'Eglise Gallicane*, tom. iv. p. 435, has given a neat and elegant abridgment of the rule of Chrodegangus.

lived after the manner of the *canons*,^h yet Chrodegangus, who, toward the middle of this century, subjected to this rule the clergy of Metz, not only added to their religious ceremonies the custom of singing hymns and anthems to God, at certain hours, and probably a variety of rites, but also, by his example, excited the Franks, the Italians, and the Germans, to distinguish themselves by their zeal in favour of the *canons*, to erect monasteries for them, and to introduce their rule into their respective countries.

xv. The supreme dominion over the church and its possessions was vested in the emperors and kings, both in the eastern and the western world. The sovereignty of the Grecian emperors, in this respect, has never been contested; and though the partisans of the Roman pontiffs endeavour to render dubious the supremacy of the Latin monarchs over the church, yet this supremacy is too manifest to be disputed by such as have considered the matter attentively,ⁱ and it is acknowledged by the wisest and most candid writers even of the Romish communion. Adrian I. in a council of bishops assembled at Rome, conferred upon Charlemagne and his successors, the right of election to the see of Rome;^k and though neither Charlemagne, nor his son Lewis, were willing to exercise this power in all its extent, by naming and creating the pontiff upon every vacancy, yet they reserved the right of approving and confirming the person that was elected to that high dignity by the priests and people; nor was the consecration of the elected pontiff of the least validity, unless performed in presence of the emperor's ambassadors.^l The Roman pontiffs obeyed the laws of the emperors, received their judicial decisions as of indispensable obligation, and executed them with the utmost punctuality and submission.^m The kings

The authority of the Roman pontiffs limited by, and subordinate to, that of the emperors.

^h See Lud. Ant. Murator. *Antiq. Italicar. medii ævi*, tom. v. p. 185; as also Lud. Thomassin. *Disciplina Ecclesiæ Vet. et Nov.* part i. lib. iii. The design of this institution was truly excellent. The authors of it, justly shocked at the vicious manners of a licentious clergy, hoped that this new institution would have a tendency to prevent the irregularities of that order, by delivering them from the cares, anxieties, and occupations of this present life. But the event has shown how much these pious hopes have been disappointed.

ⁱ For an accurate account of the rights of the Grecian emperors in religious matters, we refer the reader to Le Quien's *Oriens Christianus*, tom. i. p. 136.

^k This act is mentioned by Anastasius; it has been preserved by Yvo and Gratian, and has been the subject of a multitude of treatises.

^l See Mabillon, *Comm. in Ordinem Romanum, Musei Italici*, tom. ii. p. 113. Muratori *Droits de l'Empire sur l'Etat Ecclesiastique*, p. 87.

^m This has been amply demonstrated by Baluzius, in his *Præf. ad Capitularia Regum Francorum*, § 21.

of the Franks appointed extraordinary judges, whom they called *envoys*, to inspect into the lives and manners of the clergy, superior and inferior, to take cognisance of their contests, to terminate their disputes, to enact laws concerning the public worship, and to punish the crimes of the sacred order, as well as those of the other citizens." All churches also, and monasteries, were obliged to pay to the public treasury a tribute proportioned to their respective lands and possessions, except such as, by the pure favour of the supreme powers, were graciously exempted from this general tax.^o

xvi. It is true, indeed, that the Latin emperors did not assume to themselves the administration of the church, or the cognisance and decision of contro-

Confined within narrow limits.

versies that were purely of a religious nature. They acknowledged, on the contrary, that these matters belonged to the tribunal of the Roman pontiff and of the ecclesiastical councils.^p But this jurisdiction of the pontiff was confined within narrow limits; he could decide nothing by his sole authority, but was obliged to convene a council when any religious differences were to be terminated by an authoritative judgment. Nor did the provinces, when any controversy arose, wait for the decision of the bishop of Rome; but assembled, by their own authority, their particular councils, in which the bishops gave their thoughts, with the utmost freedom, upon the points in debate, and voted often in direct opposition to what was known to be the opinion of the Roman pontiff; all which is evident from what passed in the councils assembled by the Franks and Germans, in order to determine the celebrated controversy concerning the use and worship of images. It is further to be observed, that the power of convening councils, and the right of presiding in them, were the prerogatives of the emperors and sovereign princes, in whose dominions these assemblies were held; and that no decrees of any council obtained the force of

ⁿ See Muratori *Antiq. Ital. medii ævi*, tom. i. Diss. ix. p. 470. Franc. de Roye, *De missis Dominicis*, cap. x. p. 44, cap. viii. p. 118, 134, 168, 195.

^o See Muratori *Antiq. Ital. medii ævi*, tom. i. Diss. xvii. p. 926. See also the collection of the various pieces that were published on occasion of the dispute between Lewis XV. and his clergy, relating to the immunities of that order in France. These pieces were printed at the Hague in the year 1751, in seven volumes, 8vo. under the following title; *Ecrits pour et contre les immunités prétendues par le Clergé de France*.

^p See the dissertation of Charlemagne, *De Imaginibus*, lib. i. cap. iv. p. 48, edit. Henmann.

laws, until they were approved and confirmed by the supreme magistrate.^q Thus was the spiritual authority of Rome wisely bounded by the civil power; but its ambitious pontiffs fretted under the imperial curb, and eager to break loose their bonds, left no means unemployed for that purpose. Nay, they formed projects, which seemed less the effects of ambition than of phrensy; for they claimed a supreme dominion, not only over the church, but also over kings themselves, and pretended to reduce the whole universe under their ghostly jurisdiction. However extravagant these pretensions were, they were followed by the most vigorous efforts, and the wars and tumults that arose in the following century, contributed much to render these efforts successful.

XVII. If we turn our eyes toward the writers of this century, we shall find very few that stand distinguished in the lists of fame, either on account of erudition or genius. Among the Greeks, the following only seem worthy of mention.

(Grecian and
eastern
writers.

Germanus, bishop of Constantinople, the greatest part of whose high renown was due to his violent zeal for image worship.^r

Cosmas, bishop of Jerusalem, who acquired some reputation by his lyric vein, consecrated to the service of religion, and employed in composing hymns for public and private devotion.

George Syncellus and Theophanes, who are not the least considerable among the writers of the Byzantine history, though they are in all respects infinitely below the ancient Greek and Latin historians.

But the writer who surpassed all his contemporaries among the Greeks and orientals, was John Damascenus, a man of genius and eloquence, who, in a variety of productions full of erudition, explained the peripatetic philosophy, and illustrated the main and capital points of the Christian doctrine. It must however be acknowledged, that the eminent talents of this great man were tainted with that sordid superstition, and that excessive veneration for the ancient fathers, that were the reigning defects of the

^q All this is fully and admirably demonstrated by Baluzius, in his preface to the *Capitularia*, or laws of the kings of the Franks, and is also amply illustrated in that work. See also J. Basnage, *Histoire de l'Eglise*, tom. i. p. 270.

^r See Rich. Simon. *Critique de la Bibliotheque Ecclesiastique de M. Du Pin*, tom. i. p. 270.

age he lived in, not to mention his wretched method of explaining the doctrines of the gospel according to the principles of the Aristotelian philosophy.^s

XVIII. The first place among the Latin writers is due to Charlemagne, whose love of letters was one of the bright ornaments of his imperial dignity. The ^{Western and Latin writers.} laws which are known by the title of *Capitularia*, with several epistles, and a book concerning images, are attributed to this prince; though it seems highly probable that the most of these compositions were drawn up by other pens.^t

After this learned prince, we may justly place venerable Bede, so called from his illustrious virtues;^u Alcuin,^w the preceptor of Charlemagne; Paulinus of Aquileia,^x who were all distinguished by their laborious application, and their zeal for the advancement of learning and science, and who treated the various branches of literature, that were known in this century, in such a manner as to convince us, that it was the infelicity of the times, rather than the want of genius, that hindered them from arising to higher degrees of perfection than what they attained to. Add to these Boniface, of whom we have already spoken; Eginard, the celebrated author of the *Life of Charlemagne*, and other productions; Paul, the deacon, who acquired a considerable and lasting reputation by his *History of the Lombards*, his *Book of Homilies*, and his miscellaneous labours; Ambrose Authpert, who wrote a commentary on the *Revelations*; and Theodulphus, bishop of Orleans; and thus we shall have a complete list of all the writers who acquired any degree of esteem in this century, by their literary productions, either sacred or profane.

^s Bayle *Diction.* tom. ii. p. 950; as also the account of the writings of John Damascenus, which is published in Le Quien's edition of his works, and was composed by Leo Allatius.

^t See Jo. A. Fabricii *Bibliotheca medii ævi* Lat. tom. i. p. 936. *Histoire Littéraire de la France*, tom. iv. p. 378.

^u See the *Acta Sanctorum*, tom. April. p. 866. *Gen. Dictionary*, at the article Bede. A list of the writings of this venerable Briton, composed by himself, is published by Muratori, in his *Antiq. Italic. medii ævi*, tom. iii. p. 825.

^w *Hist. Liter. de la France*, tom. iv. p. 295. *Gen. Dictionary*, at the article Alcuin. Catelinot, who has discovered the treatise of Alcuin, *De Processione Spiritus S.* which has never been published, is preparing an edition of all the works of that learned writer. See the *Hist. Littéraire de la France*, tom. viii. *Præf.* p. 10.

^x See *Hist. Littéraire*, &c. tom. iv. p. 286. *Acta Sanct.* tom. i. *Januar.* p. 713.

CHAPTER III.

CONCERNING THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH DURING THIS CENTURY.

I. THE fundamental doctrines of Christianity were, as yet, respected and preserved in the theological writings both of the Greeks and Latins, as seems evident from the discourse of John Damascenus *concerning the orthodox faith*, and the confession of faith which was drawn up by Charlemagne.* The pure seed of celestial truth was, however, choked by a monstrous and incredible quantity of noxious weeds. The rational simplicity of the Christian worship was corrupted by an idolatrous veneration for images, and other superstitious inventions, and the sacred flame of divine charity was extinguished by the violent contentions and animosities which the progress of these superstitions occasioned in the church. All acknowledged the efficacy of our Saviour's merits; and yet all, one way or another, laboured, in effect, to diminish the persuasion of this efficacy in the minds of men, by teaching that Christians might appease an offended Deity by voluntary acts of mortification, or by gifts and oblations lavished upon the church, and by exhorting such as were desirous of salvation to place their confidence in the works and merits of the saints. Were we to enlarge upon all the absurdities and superstitions which were invented to flatter the passions of the misguided multitude, and to increase, at the expense of reason and Christianity, the opulence and authority of a licentious clergy; such an immense quantity of odious materials would swell this work to an enormous size.

II. The piety in vogue during this and some succeeding ages consisted in building and embellishing churches and chapels, in endowing monasteries, erecting basilics, hunting after the relics of saints and martyrs, and treating them with an excessive and ab-

The Christian doctrines sadly corrupted.

The piety and morals of this age.

* See the treatise of this prince, *concerning images*, book iii. p. 259, ed. Heumannii. Of the Greek writers, the reader may consult Mich. Syncellus's *Confession of faith*, published by Montfaucon, in his *Bibliotheca Coisliniana*, p. 90; and among the Latins, *An exposition of the principal doctrine of the Christian religion*, composed by Benedict, abbot of Aniane, and published by Baluzius, in his *Miscellanea*, tom. v. p. 56; as also the *Creed of Leo III.* published in the same work, tom. vii. p. 18.

surd veneration, in procuring the intercession of the saints by rich oblations or superstitious rites, in worshipping images, in pilgrimages to those places which were esteemed holy, and chiefly to Palestine, and such like absurd and extravagant practices and institutions. The pious Christian, and the profligate transgressor, showed equal zeal in the performance of these superstitious services, which were looked upon as of the highest efficacy in order to the attainment of eternal salvation; they were performed by the latter as an expiation for their crimes, and a mean of appeasing an offended Deity; and by the former with a view to obtain, from above, the good things of this life, and an easy and commodious passage to life eternal. The true genuine religion of Jesus, if we except a few of its doctrines contained in the *Creed*, was utterly unknown in this century, not only to the multitude in general, but also to the doctors of the first rank and eminence in the church, and the consequences of this corrupt ignorance were fatal to the interests of virtue. All orders of men, regardless of the obligations of morality, of the duties of the gospel, and of the culture and improvement of their minds, rushed headlong, with a perfect security, into all sorts of wickedness, from the delusive hopes that by the intercession and prayers of the saints, and the credit of the priests at the throne of God, they would easily obtain the remission of their enormities, and render the Deity propitious. This dismal account of the religion and morals of the eighth century, is confirmed by the unanimous testimony of all the historians who have written concerning that period.

III. The Greeks were of opinion, that the holy Scriptures had been successfully interpreted and explained by the ancient commentators, and therefore imagined that they rendered a most important service to the students in divinity, when, without either judgment or choice, they extracted or compiled from the works of these admired sages, their explanatory observations on the sacred writings. The commentary of John Damascenus upon the epistles of St. Paul, which was taken from the writings of Chrysostom, is alone sufficient to serve as a proof of the little discernment with which these compilations were generally made.

Exegetical,
or explanatory
theology.

The Latin expositors may be divided into two classes;

according to the different nature of their productions. In the first, we place those writers who, after the example of the Greeks, employed their labour in collecting into one body the interpretations and commentaries of the ancients. Bede distinguished himself among the expositors of this class by his explication of the epistles of St. Paul, drawn from the writings of Augustin and others.^z Still more estimable are the writers of the second class, who made use of their own penetration and sagacity in investigating the sense of the holy Scriptures. Such as Alcuin, Ambrose Authpert, the expositors of the *Revelations*, nay, and Bede also, who belongs, in reality, to both classes. It must however be acknowledged that all these commentators were destitute of the qualities that are essential to the sacred critic; for we find them in their explications neglecting entirely the natural sense of the words of Scripture, and running blindfold after a certain hidden and mystical meaning, which, to use their jargon, they usually divided into allegorical, anagogical, and tropological;^a and thus they delivered their own rash fictions and crude fancies, as the true and genuine sentiments of the sacred writers. Of this we are furnished with many examples in Alcuin's commentary on St. John; Bede's allegorical illustrations of the books of Samuel; and Charlemagne's book concerning images, in which various passages of the holy Scriptures are occasionally explained according to the taste of the times.^b

iv. The veneration of Charlemagne for the sacred writings was carried to such an excessive length,^c as to persuade that monarch, that they contained the latent seeds and principles of all arts and sciences; an opinion, no doubt, which he imbibed from the lessons of his preceptor Alcuin, and other divines who frequented his court.^d Hence the zeal with which that prince excited and encouraged the more learned among the clergy to direct their pious labours toward the illustration of the holy Scriptures. Several laws which he pub-

Charlemagne's
zeal for the
study of the
Scriptures.

^z See, for an account of the commentaries of Bede, Rich. Simon, *Critique de la Biblioth. Ecclesiast. de M. Du Pin*, tom. i. p. 280. See also Bedæ *Explicatio Geneseos ex patribus* in Martene's *Thesaur. Anecd.* tom. v. p. 111, 116, 140, and his interpretation of *Habakkuk*, *ibid.* p. 295.

^a See Carolus Magnus *De Imaginibus*, lib. i. p. 138.

^b See the same imperial author, book i. p. 84, 91, 123, 127, 131, 133, 136, 138, 145, 160, 164, 165, &c.

^c *Ibid.* *De Imagin.* lib. i. p. 231, 236.

^d J. Frickius, *De Canone Scripturæ Sacræ*, p. 184.

lished to encourage this species of learning are yet extant, as also various monuments of his deep solicitude about the advancement and propagation of Christian knowledge.^e And lest the faults that were to be found in several places of the Latin translation of the Scriptures should prove an obstacle to the execution and accomplishment of his pious views, he employed Alcuin in correcting these errors, and is said, in the last years of his life, to have spent a considerable part of his time in the same learned and pious work.^f It is also to his encouragement and direction, that some writers attribute the first German translation of the sacred writings, though others contend, that this honour is due to his son and successor Lewis, surnamed the Meek.

v. This zeal and industry of the emperor contributed, no doubt, to rouse from their sloth a lazy and ignorant clergy, and to raise up a spirit of application to literary pursuits. We cannot however help observing, that this laborious prince imprudently established certain customs, and confirmed others, which had a manifest tendency to defeat, in a great measure, his laudable designs of promoting Christian knowledge. He confirmed the practice already in use, of reading and explaining to the people, in the public assemblies, certain portions only of the Scriptures; and reduced the different methods of worship followed in different churches into one fixed rule, which was to be observed with the most perfect uniformity in all.^g Persuaded also that few of the clergy were

Misses its aim by some imprudent appointments of that emperor.

^e Baronius, *Annal. ad A. dcccxxviii. n. xxvii.* Jo. A. Fabricius, *Biblioth. Lat. medii ævi*, tom. i. p. 950. Jac. Usserius, *De sacris et scripturis vernacul.* p. 110.

^f J. A. Fabricii *Bibl. Lat. medii ævi*, tom i. p. 950. Usserius, *De sacris et scripturis vernacul.* p. 110.

^g They who imagine that the portions of Scripture which are still explained, every year, to Christians in their religious assemblies, were selected for that purpose by the order of Charlemagne, are undoubtedly mistaken; since it is manifest, that in the preceding ages there were certain portions of Scripture set apart for each day of worship in the greatest part of the Latin churches. See Jo. Henri. Thameri *Schediasma de origine et dignitate pericoparum quæ Evangelia et Epistolæ vulgo vocantur.* See also J. Franc. Buddei *Isagoge ad Theologiam*, tom. ii. p. 1640. It must however be confessed, that Charlemagne introduced some new regulations into this part of divine service; for whereas, before his time, the Latin churches differed from each other in several circumstances of the public worship, and particularly in this, that the same portions of Scripture were not read and explained in them all, he published a solemn edict, commanding all the religious assemblies within his territories to conform themselves to the rule of worship and divine service established in the church of Rome. With respect to the portions of Scripture which we call the *epistles* and *gospels*, and which from the time of Charlemagne down to us, continue to be used in divine worship, it is certain that they were read in the church of Rome so early as the sixth century. It is also certain, that this prince was extremely careful in reforming the service of the Latin churches, and appointed the form of worship used at Rome to be observed in them all. Hence the churches which did not adopt the Roman ritual, have different *epistles* and *gospels* from

capable of explaining with perspicuity and judgment the portions of Scripture which are distinguished in the ritual by the name of epistle and gospel, he ordered Paul Deacon and Alcuin to compile, from the ancient doctors of the church, *homilies* or discourses upon the epistles and gospels, which a stupid and ignorant set of priests were to commit to memory, and recite to the people. This gave rise to that famous collection, which went by the title of the *homiliarium of Charlemagne*,^h and which being followed as a model by many productions of the same kind composed by private persons from a principle of pious zeal, contributed much to nourish the indolence, and to perpetuate the ignorance of a worthless clergy.ⁱ The zeal and activity of this great prince did not stop here; for he ordered the lives of the principal saints to be written in a moderate volume, of which copies were dispersed throughout his dominions, that the people might have in the dead, examples of piety and virtue, which were nowhere to be found among the living. All these projects and designs were certainly formed and executed with upright and pious intentions, and considering the state of things in this century, were, in several respects, both useful and necessary; they, however, contrary to the emperor's intention, contributed undoubtedly to encourage the priests in their criminal sloth, and their shameful neglect of the study of the Scriptures. For the greatest part of them employed their time and labour only upon those parts of the sacred writings, which the emperor had appointed to be read in the churches, and


those which are used by us and the other western churches, who were commanded by Charlemagne to imitate the Roman service. The church of Corbetta is an example of this, as may be seen in Muratori's *Antiq. Ital.* tom. iv. p. 836; and also the church of Milan, which follows the rite of St. Ambrose. If any are desirous to know what *epistles* and *gospels* were used by the Franks and other western churches before the time of Charlemagne, they have only to consult the *Calendars* published by Martene, in his *Thesaur. Anecd.* tom. v. p. 66, the *Discourses* of Bede, published in the same work, tom. v. p. 339, and Mabillon *De Antiqua Liturgia Gallicana*; to all which may be added Peyrat, *Antiquites de la Chapelle de Roi de France*, p. 566.


^h See, for an account of this book of *Homilies*, the learned Seelen's *Selecta Literaria*, p. 252.

ⁱ Alan, abbot of Farfa in Italy, wrote in this century an enormous *book of Homilies*, the preface to which is published by Bernard Pezsius, in the *Thesaur. Anecd.* tom. vi. part i. p. 83. In the following age several works under the same title were composed by learned men; one by Hagmo, of Halberstadt, which is still extant; another by Rabanus Maurus, at the request of the emperor Lothaire; and a third by Hericus, mentioned by Pezsius in the work above quoted, p. 93. All these were wrote in Latin. The famous Otfrid, of Weissenbourg, was the first who composed a *book of Homilies* in the Teutonic language; for an account of this work, which was written in the ninth century, see Lambecius, *De Bibliotheca Vindobon. Augusta*, tom. ii. cap. v. p. 419.

explained to the people; and never attempted to exercise their capacities upon the rest of the divine word. The greatest part of the clergy also, instead of composing themselves the discourses they recited in public, confined themselves to their book of homilies, that was published by the authority of their sovereign, and thus let their talents lie uncultivated and unemployed.

VI. None of the Latins carried their theological enterprises so far as to give a complete, connected, and accurate system of the various doctrines of Christianity. It would be absurd to comprehend, The state of the didactic theology. under this title, the various discourses concerning the person and nature of Christ, which were designed to refute the errors of Felix^k and Elipand, or to combat the opinions which were now spread abroad concerning the origin of the Holy Ghost,^l and several other points; since these discourses afford no proofs either of precision or diligence in their authors. The labours and industry of the divines of this age were totally employed in collecting the opinions and authorities of the *fathers*, by whom are meant the theological writers of the first six centuries; and so blind and servile was their veneration for these doctors, that they regarded their dictates as infallible, and their writings as the boundaries of truth, beyond which reason was not permitted to push its researches. The Irish or Hibernians, who in this century were known by the name of Scots, were the only divines who refused to dishonour their reason by submitting it implicitly to the dictates of authority. Naturally subtile and sagacious, they applied their philosophy, such as it was, to the illustration of the truth and doctrines of religion; a method which was almost generally abhorred and exploded in all other nations.^m

 ^k The doctrine taught by Felix, bishop of Urgella, and his disciple Elipand, archbishop of Toledo, was, that Jesus Christ was the Son of God not by *nature*, but by *adoption*. This doctrine was also intimately connected with the Nestorian hypothesis, and was condemned in this century by the synod of Ratisbon, and the councils of Francofort and Frioul.

 ^l The error now published relating to the *Holy Ghost* was, that it proceeded from the Father *only*, and not from the Father and the Son.

^m That the Hibernians, who were called Scots in this century, were lovers of learning, and distinguished themselves, in these times of ignorance, by the culture of the sciences beyond all the other European nations, travelling through the most distant lands, both with a view to improve and to communicate their knowledge, is a fact with which I have long been acquainted, as we see them, in the most authentic records of antiquity, discharging, with the highest reputation and applause, the function of doctor in France, Germany, and Italy, both during this and the following century. But that these Hibernians were the first teachers of the *Scholastic Theology* in Europe, and so early as the eighth century illustrated the doctrines of religion by the principles of phi-

The Greeks were not so destitute of systematical divines as the Latins. John Damascenus composed a complete body of the Christian doctrine in a scientific method, under the title of *Four books concerning the orthodox faith*. The two kinds of *theology*, which the Latins termed *scholastic* and *didactic*, were united in this laborious performance, in which the author not only explains the doctrines he delivers by subtile and profound reasoning, but also confirms his explications by the authority of the ancient doctors. This book was received among the Greeks with the highest applause, and was so excessively admired, that at length it came to be acknowledged among that people as the only rule of divine truth. Many however complain of this applauded writer, as having consulted more, in his theological system, the conjectures of human reason, and the opinions of the ancients, than the genuine dictates of the sacred oracles, and of having, in consequence of this method, deviated from the true source and the essential principles of theology." To the work of Damascenus now mentioned, we may add his *Sacred Parallels*, in which he has collected, with uncommon care and industry, the opinions of the ancient doctors concerning the various points of the Christian religion. We may therefore look upon this writer as the Thomas and Lombard of the Greeks.

osophy, I learned but lately from the testimony of Benedict, abbot of Aniane, in the province of Languedoc, who lived in this period, and some of whose productions are published by Baluzius in the fifth volume of his *Miscellanea*. This learned abbot, in his *letter to Guarnanius*, p. 54, expresses himself thus; "Apud modernos scholasticos, i. e. public teachers, or schoolmasters, maxime apud Scotos est syllogismus delusionis, ut dicant, Trinitatem, sicut personarum, ita esse substantiarum;" by this it appears that the Irish divines made use of a certain syllogism, which Benedict calls *delusive*, i. e. fallacious and sophistical, to demonstrate that the *persons* in the godhead were *substances*; a captious syllogism this, as we may see from what follows, and also every way proper to throw the ignorant into the greatest perplexity, "quatenus si adsenserit illectus auditor, Trinitatem esse trium substantiarum Deum, trium derogetur cultor Deorum; si autem abnuerit, personarum denegator culpatur." It was with this miserable piece of sophistry that these subtle divines puzzled and tormented their disciples and hearers, accusing those of *tritheism* who admitted their argument, and casting the reproach of *Sabellianism* upon those who rejected it. For thus they reasoned, or rather quibbled; "you must either affirm or deny that the Three Persons in the Deity are three substances, if you affirm it, you are undoubtedly a *tritheist*, and worship three gods; if you deny it, this denial implies that they are not three distinct persons, and thus you fall into *Sabellianism*." Benedict condemns this Hibernian subtilty, and severely animadverts upon the introduction of it into theology: he also recommends in its place that amiable simplicity that is so conformable to the nature and genius of the gospel "Sed hæc de fide," says he, "et omnis caliditatis versutia simplicitate fidei catholicæ est puriæ vitanda, non captiosa interjectione linguarum, scæva impactione interpolanda." From hence it appears, that the philosophical or scholastic theology among the Latins, is of more ancient date than is commonly imagined.

n Jo. Henr. Hottinger *Bibliothecar Quadripart.* lib. iii. cap. ii. § 3, p. 372. Mart. Chemnitius, *De usu et utilitate Locor. Commun.* p. 26.

VII. None of the moral writers of this century attempted forming a complete system of the duties and virtues of the Christian life. John, surnamed Carpathius, a Greek writer, composed some *exhortatory discourses*, in which there are scarcely any marks of judgment or genius. Among the monastic orders nothing was relished but the enthusiastic strains of the mystics, and the doctrines of Dionysius the Areopagite, their pretended chief, whose supposititious writings were interpreted and explained by Johannes Darensis out of complaisance to the monks." The Latin writers confined their labours in morality to some general precepts concerning virtue and vice, that seemed rather destined to regulate the external actions of Christians, than to purify their inward principles, or to fix duty upon its proper foundations. Their precepts, also, such as they were, and their manner of explaining them, had now imbibed a strong tincture of the peripatetic philosophy, as appears from certain treatises of Bede, and the treatise of Alcuin, concerning virtue and vice.^p That the people however might be animated to the pursuit of virtue by the commanding power of example, Bede, Florus, Alcuin, Marcellinus, Ambrose Authpert, and others, employed their pious industry in writing the lives of such as had been eminent for their piety, and worthy deeds.

Moral writers.

Controversies.

VIII. The controversies that turned upon the main and essential points of religion were, during this century, few in number, and scarcely any of them managed with tolerable sagacity or judgment. The greatest part of the Greeks were involved in the dispute concerning images, in which their reasonings were utterly destitute of precision and perspicuity; while the Latins employed their chief zeal and industry in confuting and extirpating the doctrine of Elipand concerning the person of Christ. John Damascenus exposed the errors of all the different sects in a short, but useful and interesting treatise; he also attacked the Manicheans and Nestorians with a particular vehemence, and even went so far in his polemic labours, as to combat the erroneous doctrine of the Saracens. In these compositions we find several proofs of subtilty and genius, but very little of that clearness and sim-

^c Jos. Simon Assemani *Biblioth. Oriental. Vitecan.* tom. ii. p. 129.

^p This treatise is extant in the works of Alcuin, published by Quercetanus, tom. ii. p. 1218.

plicity that constitute the chief merit of polemic writings. The Jews were left almost unmolested, as the Christians were sufficiently employed by the controversies that had arisen among themselves; Anastasius, abbot of Palestine, made, however, some attempts to subdue the infidelity of that obstinate people.

IX. Of all the controversies which agitated and perplexed the Christian church during this century, that which arose concerning the worship of images in Greece, and was carried from thence into both the eastern and western provinces, was the most unhappy and pernicious in its consequences. The first sparks of this terrible flame, that had like to have proved fatal both to the interests of religion and government, had already appeared under the reign of Phillipicus Bardanes, who was created emperor of the Greeks a little after the commencement of this century. This prince, with the consent of John, patriarch of Constantinople, ordered a picture, which represented the sixth general council, to be pulled down from its place in the church of St. Sophia, A. D. 712; because this council had condemned the Monothelites, whose cause the emperor espoused with the greatest ardour and vehemence. Nor did Bardanes stop here; but sent immediately an order to Rome to remove all images of that nature from the churches and other places of worship. His orders however were far from being received with submission, or producing their designed effect; on the contrary, Constantine, the Roman pontiff, not only rejected, by a formal protest, the imperial edict, but resolved to express his contempt of it by his actions as well as his words; he ordered six pictures, representing the six general councils, to be placed in the porch of St. Peter's church; and that no act of rebellion or arrogance might be left unemployed, he assembled a council at Rome, in which he caused the emperor himself to be condemned as an apostate from the true religion. These first tumults were quelled by a revolution, which, the year following, deprived Bardanes of the imperial throne.^q

X. The dispute however broke out with redoubled fury under Leo the Isaurian, a prince of the greatest resolution and intrepidity, and the new tumults it


Its progress under Leo the Isaurian.

^q See Fred. Spanhemii *Historia imaginum restituta*, which is published in the second volume of his works, and also printed apart. Maimbourg's history of this controversy, which is full of the most absurd and malignant fictions. Muratori *Annali d' Italia*, tom. iv. p. 221.

excited were both violent and durable. Leo, unable to bear any longer the excessive height to which the Greeks carried their superstitious attachment to the worship of images, and the sharp raileries and serious reproaches which this idolatrous service drew upon the Christians from the Jews and Saracens, determined, by the most vigorous proceedings, to root out at once this growing evil. For this purpose he issued out an edict, A. D. 726, by which it was ordered, not only that the worship of images should be abrogated and relinquished, but also that all the images, except that of Christ's crucifixion, should be removed out of the churches." In this proceeding the emperor acted more from the impulse of his natural character, which was warm and vehement, than from the dictates of prudence, which avoids precipitancy where prejudices are to be combated, and destroys and mines inveterate superstitions rather by slow and imperceptible attacks than by open and violent assaults. The imperial edict produced such effects as might have been expected from the frantic enthusiasm of a superstitious people. A civil war broke out in the islands of the Archipelago, ravaged a part of Asia, and afterward reached Italy. The people, partly from their own ignorance, but principally in consequence of the perfidious suggestions of the priests and monks, who had artfully rendered the worship of images a source of opulence to their churches and cloisters, were led to regard the emperor as an apostate, and hence they considered themselves as freed from their oath of allegiance, and from all the obligations that attach subjects to their lawful sovereign.

xi. The Roman pontiffs Gregory I. and II. were the authors and ringleaders of these civil commotions and insurrections in Italy. The former, upon the emperor's refusing to revoke his edict against images, declared him, without hesitation, unworthy of the name and privileges of a Christian, and thus excluded him from the communion of the church; and no sooner was this formidable sentence made public,

The contests between the partisans of images who were called *iconoduli* and their opposers who were called *iconoclasts*.

 In this account of the imperial edict, Dr. Mosheim follows the opinions of Baronius, Fleury, and Le Suer. Others affirm, with more probability, that this famous edict did not enjoin the pulling down images every where, and casting them out of the churches, but only prohibited the paying to them any kind of adoration or worship. It would seem as if Leo was not, at first, averse to the use of images, as ornaments, or even as helps to devotion and memory; for at the same time that he forbade them to be worshipped, he ordered them to be placed higher in the churches, say some, to avoid this adoration; but afterward finding that they were the occasion of idolatry, he had them removed from the churches and broken.

than the Romans, and other Italian provinces, that were subject to the Grecian empire, violated their allegiance, and rising in arms, either massacred or banished all the emperor's deputies and officers. Leo, exasperated by these insolent proceedings, resolved to chastise the Italian rebels, and to make the haughty pontiff feel, in a particular manner, the effects of his resentment ; but he failed in the attempt. Doubly irritated by this disappointment, he vented his fury against images, and their worshippers, in the year 730, in a much more terrible manner than he had hitherto done ; for in a council assembled at Constantinople, he degraded from his office Germanus, the bishop of that imperial city, who was a patron of images, put Anastasius in his place, ordered all the images to be publicly burnt, and inflicted a variety of severe punishments upon such as were attached to that idolatrous worship. These rigorous measures divided the Christian church into two violent factions, whose contests were carried on with an ungoverned rage, and produced nothing but mutual invectives, crimes, and assassinations. Of these factions, the one adopted the adoration and worship of images, and were on that account called *Iconoduli* or *Iconolatræ* ; while the other maintained that such worship was unlawful, and that nothing was more worthy of the zeal of Christians, than to demolish and destroy those statues and pictures that were the occasions and objects of this gross idolatry, and hence they were distinguished by the titles of *Iconomachi* and *Iconoclastæ*. The furious zeal which Gregory II. had shown in defending the odious superstition of image worship, was not only imitated, but even surpassed by his successor, who was the third pontiff of that name ; and though at this distance of time we are not acquainted with all the criminal circumstances that attended the intemperate zeal of these insolent prelates, yet we know with the utmost certainty, that it was owing to their extravagant attachment to image worship that the Italian provinces were torn from the Grecian empire.*

* The Greek writers tell us that both the Gregories carried their insolence so far as to excommunicate Leo and his son Constantine, to dissolve the obligation of the oath of allegiance which the people of Italy had taken to these princes, and to prohibit their paying tribute to them, or showing them any marks of submission and obedience. These facts are also acknowledged by many of the partisans of the Roman pontiffs, such as Baronius, Sigonus *De Regno Italiæ*, and their numerous followers. On the other hand, some learned writers, particularly among the French, alleviate considerably the crime of the Gregories, and positively deny that they either excommunicated

XII. Constantine, to whom the furious tribe of the image worshippers had given by way of derision the name of Copronymus,^t succeeded his father Leo in the empire, A. D. 741, and animated with an equal zeal and ardour against the new idolatry, employed all his influence in extirpating and abolishing the worship of images, in opposition to the vigorous efforts of the Roman pontiffs, and the superstitious monks. His manner of proceeding was attended with greater marks of equity and moderation than had appeared in the measures pursued by Leo ; for, knowing the respect which the Greeks had for the decisions of general councils, whose authority they considered as supreme and unlimited in religious matters, he assembled at Constantinople, A. D. 754, a council composed of the eastern bishops, in order to have this important question examined with the utmost care, and decided with wisdom, seconded by a just and lawful authority. This assembly, which the Greeks regard as the *seventh œcumenical council*, gave judgment, as was the custom of those times, in favour of the opinion embraced by the emperor, and solemnly condemned the worship, and also the use of images.^u But this decision was not sufficient to vanquish the blind obstinacy of superstition ; many adhered still to their idolatrous worship, and none made a more turbulent resistance to the wise decree of this council than the monks, who still continued to excite commotions in the state, and to blow the flames of sedition and rebellion among the people. Their malignity was however chastised by Constantine, who, filled with a just indignation at their

Their progress under Constantine Copronymus.

the emperors above mentioned, or called off the people from their duty and allegiance. See Launoïus, *Epistola*, lib. vii. Ep. vii. p. 456, tom. v. opp. part ii. Nat. Alexander, *Select. Histor. Ecclesiast. Capit.* Sæc. viii. Dissert. i. p. 456. Petr. de Marca, *Concordia Sacerdotii et Imperii*, lib. iii. cap. xi. Bossuet, *Defens. Declarationis Cleri Gallic. de potestate Eccles.* part i. lib. vi. cap. xii. p. 197. Giannone, *Histoire Civile de Naples*, tom. i. p. 400. All these found their opinions concerning the conduct of the Gregories, chiefly upon the authority of the Latin writers, such as Anastasius, Paul Deacon, and others, who seem to have known nothing of that audacious insolence with which those pontiffs are said to have opposed the emperors, and even represent them as having given several marks of their submission and obedience to the imperial authority. Such are the contrary accounts of the Greek and Latin writers ; and the most prudent use we can make of them is, to suspend our judgment with respect to a matter, which the obscurity that covers the history of this period renders it impossible to clear up. All that we can know with certainty is, that the zeal of the two pontiffs above mentioned for the worship of images, furnished to the people of Italy the occasion of falling from their allegiance to the Grecian emperors.

^t This nickname was given to Constantine from his having defiled the sacred font at his baptism.

^u The authority of this council is not acknowledged by the Roman catholics, no more than the obligation of the *second commandment*, which they have prudently struck out of the decalogue.

sedition practices, punished several of them in an exemplary manner, and by new laws set bounds to the violence of monastic rage. Leo IV. who, after the death of Constantine, was declared emperor, A. D. 775, adopted the sentiments of his father and grandfather, and pursued the measures which they had concerted for the extirpation of idolatry out of the Christian church; for having perceived that the worshippers of images could not be engaged by mild and gentle proceedings to abandon this superstitious practice, he had recourse to the coercive influence of penal laws.

XIII. A cup of poison, administered by the impious counsel of a perfidious spouse, deprived Leo IV. of his life, A. D. 780, and rendered the idolatrous cause of images triumphant. The profligate Irene, after having thus accomplished the death of her husband, held the reins of empire during the minority of her son Constantine; and to establish her authority on more solid foundations, entered into an alliance with Adrian, bishop of Rome, A. D. 786, and summoned a council at Nice in Bythia, which is known by the title of the *second Nicene council*. In this assembly the imperial laws concerning the new idolatry were abrogated, the decrees of the council of Constantinople reversed, the worship of images and of the cross restored, and severe punishments denounced against such as maintained that God was the only object of religious adoration. It is impossible to imagine any thing more ridiculous and trifling than the arguments upon which the bishops, assembled in this council, founded their decrees.^v The authority however of these decrees was held sacred by the Romans, and the Greeks considered in the light of parricides and traitors all such as refused to submit to them. The other enormities of the flagitious Irene and her deserved fate, cannot with propriety be treated of here.

XIV. In these violent contests, the most of the Latins, such as the Britons, Germans, and Gauls, seemed to steer a middle way between the opposite tenets of the contending parties. They were of opinion that images might be lawfully preserved, and even placed in the churches, but at the same time they looked upon all worship of them as highly injurious and offensive to the

^v Mart. Chemnitzius, *Examen Concilii Tridentini*, part iv. loc. ii. cap. v. p. 52. Lenfant, *Preservatif contre la Reaction avec de Siege de la Rome*, part iii. lettre xvii. p. 446.

Supreme Being.* Such particularly were the sentiments of Charlemagne, who distinguished himself in this important controversy. By the advice of the French bishops who were no friends to this second council of Nice, he ordered some learned and judicious divine to compose *Four Books concerning images*, which he sent, in the year 790, to Adrian, the Roman pontiff, with a view to engage him to withdraw his approbation of the decrees of that council. In this performance the reasons alleged by the Nicene bishops to justify the worship of images, are refuted with great accuracy and spirit.^y They were not however left without defence; Adrian, who was afraid of acknowledging even an emperor for his master, composed an answer to the *Four Books* mentioned above, but neither his arguments, nor his authority, were sufficient to support the superstition he endeavoured to maintain; for, in the year 794, Charlemagne assembled, at Francfort on the Mainè, a council of three hundred bishops, in order to re-examine this important question; in which the opinion contained in the *Four Books* was solemnly confirmed, and the worship of images unanimously condemned.^z From hence we may conclude, that in this century the Latins deemed it neither impious, nor unlawful, to dissent from the opinion of the Roman pontiff, and even to charge that prelate with error.

xv. While the controversy concerning images was at its height, a new contest arose among the Latins and Greeks about the source from whence the Holy Ghost *proceeded*. The Latins affirmed, that this divine spirit proceeded from the Father and the Son: the Greeks, on the contrary, asserted, that it

The controversy about the derivation of the Holy Ghost.

* The aversion the Britons had to the worship of images may be seen in Spelman *ad Concilia Magnæ Britannicæ*, tom. i. p. 73.

y The books of Charlemagne *concerning images*, which deserve an attentive perusal, are yet extant; and when they were become extremely scarce, were republished at Hanover, in 8vo. in 1731, by the celebrated Christopher. Aug. Heuman, who enriched this edition with a learned preface. These books are adorned with the venerable name of Charlemagne: but it is easy to perceive that they are the production of a scholastic divine, and not of an emperor. Several learned men have conjectured, that Charlemagne composed these books with the assistance of his preceptor Aleuin; see Heumanni *Præf.* p. 51, and Bunau *Historia Imperii German.* tom. i. p. 490. This conjecture, though far from being contemptible, cannot be admitted without hesitation; since Aleuin was in England when these books were composed. We learn from the history of his life, that he went into England, A. D. 789, and did not return from thence before 792.

z This event is treated with a degree of candour not more laudable than surprising, by Mabillon, in *Præf. ad Sæculum iv. Actorum SS. Ord. Benedict.* part v. See also Jo. Georg. Dorscheus, *Collat. ad Concilium Francofurtense*, Argentor. 1649, in 4to.

proceeded from the Father only. The origin of this controversy is covered with perplexity and doubt. It is however certain, that it was agitated in the council of Gentilli, near Paris, A. D. 767, in presence of the emperor's legates,^a and from this we may conclude, with a high degree of probability, that it arose in Greece at that time when the contest about images was carried on with the greatest vehemence. In this controversy the Latins alleged, in favour of their opinion, the creed of Constantinople, which the Spaniards and French had successively corrupted, upon what occasion is not well known, by adding the word *filioque* in that part of it which contained the doctrine concerning the Holy Ghost. The Greeks, on the other hand, made loud complaints of this criminal attempt of the Latins to corrupt by a manifest interpolation, a creed which served as a rule of doctrine for the church universal, and declared this attempt impudent and sacrilegious. Thus the dispute changed at length its object, and was transferred from the matter to the interpolated word above mentioned;^b in the following century it was carried on with still greater vehemence, and added new fuel to the dissensions which already portended a schism between the eastern and western churches.^c

a See Le Cointe, *Annales Eccles. Francorum*, tom. v. p. 698.

b Learned men generally imagine that this controversy began about the word *filioque*, which some of the Latins had added to the creed that had been drawn up by the council of Constantinople, and that from the word the dispute proceeded to the doctrine itself: see Mabillon, *Act. Sanctor. Ord. Bened. Sac. iv. part i. Præf. p. iv.* who is followed by many in this opinion. But this opinion is certainly erroneous. The doctrine was the first subject of controversy, which afterward extended to the word *filioque*, considered by the Greeks as a manifest interpolation. Among other proofs of this, the council of Gentilli shows evidently, that the doctrine concerning the Holy Spirit had been, for a considerable time, the subject of controversy, when the dispute arose about the word now mentioned. Pagi, in his *Critica in Baronium*, tom. iii. p. 323, is of opinion, that this controversy had both its date and its occasion from the dispute concerning images; for when the Latins treated the Greeks as heretics, on account of their opposition to image worship, the Greeks, in their turn, charged the Latins also with heresy, on account of their maintaining that the Holy Ghost proceeded from the Father and the Son. The learned critic has, however, advanced this opinion without sufficient proof, and we must therefore consider it as no more than a probable conjecture.

c See Pithoei *Hist. controuv. de processione Spiritus S.* at the end of his *Codex Canon. Eccles. Roman.* p. 355. Le Quien, *Oriens Christian.* tom. iii. p. 354. Ger. J. Vossius, *De Tribus Symbolis.* Diss. iii. p. 65; and above all, Jo. Georg. Walchius, *Histor. Controuv. de Processione Spiritus S.* published in 8vo. at Jena, in 1751.

CHAPTER IV.

CONCERNING THE RITES AND CEREMONIES USED IN THE CHURCH DURING THIS CENTURY.

I. THE religion of this century consisted almost entirely in a motley round of external rites and ceremonies. We are not therefore to wonder that more Ceremonies multiplied. zeal and diligence were employed in multiplying and regulating these outward marks of a superstitious devotion, than in correcting the vices and follies of men, in enlightening their understandings, and forming their hearts. The administration of the sacrament of the Lord's supper, which was deemed the most solemn and important branch of divine worship, was now every where embellished, or rather deformed, with a variety of senseless fopperies, which destroyed the beautiful simplicity of that affecting and salutary institution. We also find manifest traces in this century of that superstitious custom of celebrating what were called *solitary masses*,^a though it be difficult to decide whether they were instituted by a public law, or introduced by the authority of private persons.^e Be that as it may, this single custom is sufficient to give us an idea of the superstition and darkness that sat brooding over the Christian church in this ignorant age, and renders it unnecessary to enter into a farther detail of the absurd rites with which a designing priesthood continued to disfigure the religion of Jesus.

II. Charlemagne seemed disposed to stem this torrent of superstition, which gathered force from day to day; for not to mention the zeal with which he Charlemagne's zeal for the rites of the church of Rome. opposed the worship of images, there are other circumstances that bear testimony to his intentions in this matter, such as his preventing the multiplication of festivals, by reducing them to a fixed and limited number, his prohibiting the ceremony of consecrating the church bells by the rite of holy aspersion, and other ecclesiastical laws

^a *Solitary* or *private masses* were those that were celebrated by the priest alone, in behalf of souls detained in purgatory, as well as upon some other particular occasions. These masses were prohibited by the laws of the church, but they were a rich source of profit to the clergy. They were condemned by the canons of a synod assembled at Metz under Charlemagne, as criminal innovations, and as the fruits of avarice and sloth.

^e See Charlemagne's book concerning images, p. 215: as also George Calixtus, *De Missis Solitariis*, § 12.

of his enacting, which redound to his honour. Several circumstances however concurred to render his designs abortive, and to blast the success of his worthy purposes, and none more than his excessive attachment to the Roman pontiffs, who were the patrons and protectors of those who exerted themselves in the cause of ceremonies. This vehement passion for the lordly pontiff was inherited by the great prince of whom we are now speaking, from his father Pepin, who had already commanded the manner of singing, and the kind of church music in use at Rome, to be observed every where in all Christian churches. It was in conformity with his example, and in compliance with the repeated and importunate solicitation of the pontiff Adrian, that Charlemagne laboured to bring all the Latin churches to follow, as their model, the church of Rome, not only in the article now mentioned, but also in the whole form of their worship, in every circumstance of their religious service.¹ Several churches, however, among which those of Milan and Corbetta distinguished themselves eminently, absolutely rejected this proposal; and could neither be brought, by persuasion nor violence, to change their usual method of worship.

CHAPTER V.

CONCERNING THE DIVISIONS AND HERESIES THAT TROUBLED THE CHURCH
DURING THIS CENTURY.

I. THE Arians, Manicheans, and Marcionites, though often depressed by the force of penal laws, and the power of the secular arm, gathered strength in the east, amidst the tumults and divisions with which the Grecian empire was perpetually agitated, and drew great numbers into the profession of their opinions.² The Monothelites, to whose cause the emperor Philippicus, and many others of the first rank and dignity were most zealous well-wishers, regained their credit in several places. The condition also of both the Nestorians and Monophysites was easy and agreeable under the dominion of the Arabi-

¹ The ancient sects recover strength.

¹ See Charlemagne's *Treatise concerning Images*, book i. p. 52. Eginard, *De vita Caroli Magni*, cap. 26, p. 94, edit. Bassellii.

² In Europe also Arianism prevailed greatly among the barbarous nations that embraced the Christian faith.

ans; their power and influence was considerable; nor were they destitute of means of weakening the Greeks, their irreconcilable adversaries, and of spreading their doctrines, and multiplying every where the number of their adherents.

II. In the church which Boniface had newly erected in Germany, he himself tells us, that there were many perverse and erroneous reprobates, who had no true notion of religion, and his friends and adherents confirm this assertion. But the testimony both of the one and the others is undoubtedly partial, and unworthy of credit; since it appears from the most evident proofs, that the persons here accused of errors and heresies were Irish and French divines, who refused that blind submission to the church of Rome, which Boniface was so zealous to propagate every where. Adalbert, a Gaul, and Clement, a native of Ireland, were the persons whose opposition gave the most trouble to the ambitious legate. The former got himself consecrated bishop, without the consent of Boniface, excited seditions and tumults among the eastern Franks, and appears indeed to have been both flagitious in his conduct, and erroneous in his opinions; among other irregularities, he was the forger^b of a letter to the human race, which was said to have been written by Jesus Christ, and to have been carried from heaven by the archangel Michael.^c As to Clement, his character and sentiments were maliciously misrepresented, since it appears by the best and most authentic accounts, that he was much better acquainted with the true principles and doctrines of Christianity than Boniface himself; and hence he is considered by many as a confessor and sufferer for the truth in this barbarous age.^k Be that as it will, both Adalbert and Clement were condemned, at the instigation of Boniface, by the pontiff Zachary, in a council assembled at Rome, A. D. 748, and in consequence thereof were committed to prison, where, in all probability, they concluded their days.

^b See the *Histoire Littéraire de la France*, tom. iv. p. 82.

^c There is an edition of this letter published by the learned Stephen Baluzius, in the *Capitularia Regum Francorum*, tom. ii. p. 1396.

^k We find an enumeration of the erroneous opinions of Clement in the letters of Boniface, *Epistol.* cxxxv. p. 189. See also *Usserii Sylloge Epistolarum Hibernicarum*, p. 12. *Nouveau Dictionnaire Histor. Critic.* tom. i. p. 133. ¶ The zealous Boniface was too ignorant to be a proper judge of heresy, as appears by his condemning Virgilius for believing that there were antipodes. The great heresy of Clement seems to have been his preferring the decisions of Scripture to decrees of councils and the opinions of the fathers, which he took the liberty to reject when they were not conformable to the word of God.

¶ This is the true date of the council assembled by Zachary for the condemnation

III. Religious discord ran still higher in Spain, France, and Germany, toward the conclusion of this century; and the most unhappy tumults and commotions were occasioned by a question proposed to Felix, bishop of Urgella, by Elipand, archbishop of Toledo, who desired to know *in what sense* Christ was the Son of God. The answer which the former gave to this question was, that Christ, considered in his divine nature, was *truly* and *essentially* the Son of God; but that, considered as a man, he was only so *nominally* and *by adoption*. This doctrine was spread abroad by the two prelates; Elipand propagated it in the different provinces of Spain, and Felix throughout Septimania, while the pontiff Adrian, and the greatest part of the Latin doctors, looked upon this opinion as a renovation of the Nestorian heresy by its representing Christ as divided into two distinct persons. In consequence of this, Felix was successively condemned by the councils of Narbonne, Ratisbon, Frankfort on the Maine, and Rome; and was finally obliged, by the council of Aix la Chapelle, to retract his error, and to change his opinion.^m The change he made was, however, rather nominal than real, the common shift of temporizing divines; for he still retained his doctrine, and died in the firm belief of it at Lyons, where he had been banished by Charlemagne.ⁿ Elipand, on the contrary, lived secure in Spain under the dominion of the Saracens, far removed from the thunders of synods and councils, and out of the reach of that coercive power in religious matters whose utmost efforts can go no further than to make the erroneous hypocrites or martyrs. Many are of opinion that the disciples of Felix, who were called *adoptians*, departed much less from the doctrine generally

of Adalbert and Clement, and not the year 745, as Fleury* and Mabillon† have pretended in which error they are followed by Mr. Bower, in the third volume of his *History of the Popes*, p. 325. The truth is, that the letter of Boniface, in consequence of which this council was assembled, must have been wrote in the year 748; since he declares in that letter, that he had been near thirty years legate of the holy see of Rome, into which commission he entered, as all authors agree, about the year 719.

^m The council of Narbonne that condemned Felix, was held in the year 788, that of Ratisbon in 792, that of Francfort in 794, that of Rome in 799.

ⁿ The authors who have written concerning the sect of Felix, are mentioned by J. Alb. Fabricius, *Biblioth. Lat. medii ævi*, tom. ii. p. 482. Add to these Petrus de Marca, in his *Marca Hispanica*, lib. iii. cap. xii. p. 368. Jo. de Ferreras, *Histoire Generale d'Espagne*, tom. ii. p. 518, 523, 528, 535, 560. Jo. Mabillon, *Pref. ad Sac. iv. Actor. SS. Ord. Benedicti*, part. ii. There are also very particular accounts given of Felix by Dom. Colonia, *Histoire Literaire de la Vielle de Lyon*, tom. ii. p. 70, and by the Benedictine monks in their *Histoire Literaire de la France*, tom. iv. p. 431.

* *Hist. Ecclesiast.* tom. ix. p. 296.

† *Annal. Ord. Benedict.* lib. xxii. n. 8.

received among Christians, than is commonly imagined ; and that what chiefly distinguished their tenets was the term they used, and their manner of expression, rather than a real diversity of sentiments.^o But as this sect, together with their chief, thought proper to make use of singular, and sometimes of contradictory expressions ; this furnished such as accused them of Nestorianism, with very plausible reasons to support their charge.

^o Jo. George Dorscheus, *Collat. ad concilium Francofurt.* p. 101. Warenfels, *De Lagomachiis Eruditor.* p. 459. Opp. Jac. Basnagius *Præf. ad Etherium* in Henr. Canisii *Lectio. Antiquis*, tom. ii. pars i. p. 284. George Calixtus, *Singul. Diss.*

END OF VOLUME ONE.



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